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REFORMERS

BEFORE THE

REFORMATION,

PRINCIPALLY IN

GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS,

DEPICTED BY

DR. C. ULLMANN,

THE TRANSLATION

BY THE

REV. ROBERT MENZIES.

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REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION,

PRINCIPALLY IN

GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH BOOKS,

EXHIBITING THE POSITIVE RUDIMENTS OF THE REFORMATION.

INTRODUCTION.

We have seen in the first volume, with reference to the general spirit of the Church, that the need of a change and renovation existed, and was deeply felt. From the law which Christianity had again become, men longed to escape into the enlargement of the Gospel, and to exchange their ecclesiastical bondage, not indeed for lawlessness of spirit, but for the liberty of the children of God: At the sametime a vigorous warfare was maintained against several of the ecclesiastical disorders, for example, the usurpations of the hierarchy, the corrupt morals of the clergy and monks, and the false and demoralizing doctrines of the merit of works, and efficacy of indulgences. Such a state of things, doubtless, involved germs of positive renovation; for the original and sound was confronted with what had become corrupt, and the true with the false. On the whole, however, this sense of want, and conflict with evil, are more of a negative kind; whereas the creation of a new state of[1] the Church, as we have already shown, required that certain rudiments, decidedly positive, should be present, and that what was destined at the Reformation to become a great and general fact, should already exist in the feelings and intelligence of numbers, under however great varieties of form, colour, and degree. With this more positive aspect of the subject, we are to be occupied in the present volume.

As the Reformation was a renewal of the state of the Christian Society in all its branches, its rudiments are to be discovered partly in the domain of life, and partly in that of knowledge and

1 Introduction to vol. 1st.

doctrine. Some of them are of a religious and moral, some of a scientific sort, and they are all the more necessarily of both, the closer the connection of life with knowledge, and of knowledge with life. The former must naturally be looked for chiefly among the people, who took on a deeper impression of Christianity; the latter among the learned and within the precincts of the School, in a more liberal and pure cultivation of Christian knowledge and science.

The religious and moral elements which prepared the Reformation, originated in a fresh and powerful quickening of the Christian spirit in the members of the Church, and were as follows. A deeper concern about the truths of Christianity was awakened in the heart; the moral sense was roused and sharpened, withdrawn from the externals of good works, and directed to their source in the inward disposition and bias of the will; in general, a warm-hearted, pure, and earnest evangelical piety, in impressive sermons and genuine patterns of apostolical virtue, was vigorously and effectually opposed to the externalization of the Church; and all matters relating to Christianity were treated with proper seriousness. At a time when no intermediate system had as yet been effectually developed between that of the Schoolmen, on the one hand, and that of the mystics, upon the other, the only element in which the sense of religion could be thus warned and deepened, and the moral faculty receive a stricter discipline, was practical and ascetical mysticism, which, in the course of the effort, was itself progressively clarified, and became more pure and Christian; while the means available for working out the effect were the public, free, and extra-official preaching of the Gospel, private edification in more confined religious societies, circulating among the people the Scriptures and other useful books, encouraging in religious services the use of the mother-tongue, which appealed more powerfully to the heart, vigorously exciting among all ranks a spirit of morality by open and brotherly communications on moral subjects, and mutual improvement by the free confession of sin. By these means Christianity recovered a deep seat in the heart, from which, at the Reformation, it was, as it were, to be born again.

The scientific rudiments were partly philosophical, partly philological, and partly of a strictly theological sort. Philosophy, indeed, had comparatively little to do in this transitionary process, and even that little was rather of negative than positive utility. Far from being based upon philosophy, the Reformation,[1] in its whole growth and ultimate introduction, was much more the consequence of a violent reaction against it by the free and independent spirit of Christianity. On only one side did philosophy contribute to the revival of Christian piety and knowledge. We allude to Platonism, which, being naturally akin to the Gospel, now entered into league with the new and living theology, and rose with fresh vigour against the Aristotelianism of the Schoolmen. This phenomenon, however, appears more strongly marked in Italy, than in the countries which are to be the theatres of our observation. Of much greater moment was the new birth of philology and antiquities. As the Scholastic theology, which was to be subverted, had in the course of time sunk into total barbarism, it was important, that a purer taste for the sound and natural, the beautiful and good, should be formed, by cultivating afresh an acquaintance with the ancients. While, on the other hand, the theology which was to be born again, manifested itself as essentially Biblical, and as requiring to be drawn ever more and more purely from its source, and it was therefore of still greater importance to revive a knowledge of the ancient tongues, Greek, Hebrew, and even pure Latin, as the qualification for a thorough and independent study of the Sacred records and the ancient Fathers of the Church, and an exhibition of the treasures thus acquired in a worthy and attractive style. But, as was natural to expect, of far the greatest consequence was the new theology which grew up under these circumstances. Produced from the womb of the re-awakened Christian life, nursed with the milk of practical mysticism, which had diffused a deeper and more heartfelt piety, cultivated in the spirit of kindness and freedom, which had grown from the same root, strengthened with the marrow of reviving science and especially of philology, itself pressing eagerly forward in the investigation of Scripture,

[1] Vol. i. p. 3 2.

and guided by the truths and archetypes of life which the Scriptures contain, a theology was now growing up, pious at heart, but no less thirsting for light, and accessible to every beam of the new day which strove upon the ground of Scripture and Scriptural Christianity, to blend, in harmonious mixture, the love with the knowledge of divine things, and to unfold itself upon every side as a free and independent science, beholden neither to philosophy nor yet to the Church and its traditions, but at the same time patient of restraint, and obedient to the law of Christian truth,—a theology in which we find almost all the ingredients which constitute, in their combination, that of the Reformers.

The part taken by the people in furthering the Reformation is most fully and vividly exhibited in the remarkable institute of the Brethren of the Common Lot; while, on the other hand, the theology which, though preceding the Reformation, comprehended all its principles, is best represented by John Wessel, and the men who were his associates. The two, however, are again intimately connected with each other, inasmuch as John Wessel was trained in the schools of the institute, and without in the least disavowing the pious spirit which reigned among them, carried their scientific efforts in the department of theology to the utmost height. The account of these two movements, and of all connected with them, will occupy the volume which we now commence. We shall not enter upon the philosophical and philological elements preparative of the Reformation. The former, in their more independent development, belong to another province, whereas the latter have already been sufficiently discussed. Still, in describing John Wessel's scientific training, his mode of thinking, and circle of friends, we shall have an opportunity of alluding to the matters pertaining to this field. The account to be given of the institute of the Brethren also involves much that is of importance for the philological preparation.

We commence with the Brotherhood of the Common Lot, that having been the maternal soil upon which the mind and theology of *Wessel* were reared. This institute, too, had rudimental antecedents, both external and internal, which are highly worthy of notice. Ere it could attain to the pure form in which we see it

finely blending zeal for practical Christianity with the love of science, it had various stages through which to pass, and much sediment to deposit. There were two main roots from whose junction it took its rise. One of these, obvious to the view, was the free communities existing in the previous age for practical religious objects; the other, more spiritual and inward, was the mysticism of the mediæval period. The two had already been partially combined, but never in the same manner or form. Above all, however, mysticism had a long process of fermentation and devolopment to undergo, before its waters were purified into the bright and limpid, soothing and enlivening draught, furnished in the writings of Thomas à Kempis, the best master of practical wisdom the Brethren ever reared. Here we first meet with the free-thinking mysticism of the Beghards; then with the speculative and pantheistic of Master Eckart; then with the theism of John Ruysbroek, as the transition from the speculative to the practical; next with the devotional and practical mysticism of Gerhard Groot and his brethren, and last of all, as its most finished product, with Thomas à Kempis' wisdom of life and love. As mysticism in general, especially the more scriptural and practical sort, was of high importance for the theology of the Reformation, we shall trace its progress and development down to Thomas à Kempis, and its ramifications into Germany. Nay, we shall meet with it again in the history of Wessel, for the tree of his theology, though stretching upwards to the light in a higher degree than that of à Kempis, still imbibed from this soil the best portion of its strength. Other considerations also give importance to the Brethren of the Common Lot. The attention they paid to the religious instruction and improvement of the people, as well as to the education of the young, the zeal they shewed for Bible circulation, and the use of the mother tongue in religion, their peculiar moral discipline and ascetical school, by which they operated so powerfully not only upon themselves, but upon the common people, are all things which directly or indirectly exercised a positive influence upon the Reformation. In the delineation of them, we have the advantage that they are severally represented in a very effective manner by personages of great eminence, such as Gerhard Groot, Florentius Radewins, Gerhard Zerbolt, and Thomas à Kempis.

After thus describing the two main tendencies that led to the Reformation, we shall again collect the materials into a retrospective summary, and then part from the reader with a few remarks upon the relation of the Reformation to the period which preceded it.

These observations indicate the leading features in the contents of the following books, and we now take up the subject itself.

BOOK THIRD.

THE

BRETHREN OF THE COMMON LOT

AND THE

MYSTICS WHO PRECEDED THEM;

OR THE

POPULAR AND PRACTICAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE REFORMATION.

Such monasteries and brother-houses please me beyond measure. Would to God that all monastic institutions were like them! Clergymen, cities, and countries, would then be better served and more prosperous than they now are.

LUTHER.

Let whosoever will read this little book (the German Theology), and then let him say whether theology among us be old or new; for this book is not new. But perhaps they will allege, as formerly, that we are German theologians. We are content to be so. . . . . God grant that this little book may become better known, and it will then be found that the German theologians are unquestionably the best.

LUTHER.

PART FIRST.

HOW THE INSTITUTE OF THE COMMON LOT ORIGINATED. ITS RUDIMENTS, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL.

CHAPTER FIRST.

THE FREE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIPS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

"That which is to become great must begin small," is the observation of Mathesius upon the progress of Luther; and John Wessel, the writer whom we are to depict in the following pages, says to the same effect, that "All the great works of God have ever taken their rise from minute germs. The fig-tree springs from one of the smallest seeds, as from the acorn does the mighty oak."[1] Whatever is truly great and profound in moral or scientific life, makes its appearance not with pomp and tumult, but in unostentatious silence. Its growth is slow, and its root secret. A seed is cast forth, and often the sower scarcely lives to see it spring. But if there be true life in it, its day comes, and its sun shines, and it springs and waxes into a fruitful and umbrageous tree. One of the most pleasing duties of the historian is to investigate

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 358 and 363, where we also read, Omnium rerum initia parvula, ex minimis coalescunt.

phenomena of this description, in which the quiet life and labour of some individual have issued in a result memorable in the history of the world. In this class we may justly reckon the effects produced by the establishments and schools of the *Brethren of the Common Lot* in Holland and Germany. The heart-felt piety of a Gerhard Groot, Florentius Radewins, and Thomas à Kempis, confined, though it was, within the narrowest sphere, and directed exclusively to practical objects, yet founded the institutions which sent forth the great restorers of science in these countries, and the proximate and most influential precursors of the Reformation in Germany. Nor did they, like Erasmus (who himself received part of his early education under the auspices of the Brethren), and many others, exert their influence merely in the circle of the learned, and amongst the higher classes; but what was perhaps of more importance, they laboured among the people, and laid the foundations of ecclesiastical reform, in the very heart and centre of religious life.

In order, however, thoroughly to understand the origin of this important institute, and correctly estimate its spirit and position, we must go much farther back into the middle age. About the twelfth century, and particularly in Upper Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, the stirrings of spiritual life began once more, and in various ways, to be deeply felt among the nations of the West; while efforts originating in a real inward want, were made to call again into existence the Christianity of the intellect, the heart, and the life, with its apostolical simplicity, charity, and self-denial. The persons, whether male or female, who caught the infection of this spirit, were forced by the corruption prevailing both in society and the church, to seek for themselves a quiet retreat, where, in seclusion from the world, they might enjoy the blessedness of inward peace, and remain connected with society by no bond except that of charity and beneficence. Originally this had been also the end and aim of Monachism. Even the monasteries, however, had long been involved in the universal degeneracy, often to an extent of which it is horrible to think. The monks themselves were both the most corrupt of men, and the worst corruptors of the age. And yet it is no uncommon thing to discover, side by side with the deepest debasement, the most vigorous effort to rise, just as the

sanitary virtue operates most powerfully upon the organ most affected by disease. Accordingly we find a double result. In the first place, many truly great, serious, and energetic Christian characters were produced in the very domain of monachism; while, by whole monastic communities, or at least the better part of them, the purest objects of Christianity were strenuously promoted, as, for instance, the culture of a deeper and more heartfelt piety by the Augustinians,—the vindication of the liberty of the Church by a part of the Franciscans,—and the practice of a higher, sometimes an over-strained severity of morals by the Cistercians and Carthusians; so that in the very worst corruption of monachism we trace the operation of a conservative power of good. Nor, certainly, is it to be considered as accidental, that several of the most distinguished reformers themselves were trained in the cloisters, especially those of the Augustinian order. In the second place, although monachism as a whole had now degenerated from its original, there grew up beside it something new, and nearly allied to it, which strove by a purer and freer method, to realize that for which the monastic communities were originally designed, but which they were now no longer able to effect. We here speak of those peculiar religious associations of the middle ages, which partially wore the outward form of the monastic life, but were exempt from its restraints and connection with the hierarchy, and animated by a more intense and profound evangelical spirit. Through the greater part of the middle ages we can trace a succession of *free spiritual associations*, which were often oppressed and persecuted by the hierarchy, pertained rather to the life of the people, than to the frame-work of the Church, exhibited more or less a regulated form, and professed a diversity of doctrines, but which all emanated from a fundamental endeavour after practical Christianity.

First, there arose in the Netherlands, as early as the eleventh century, and partly owing to the disproportion between the sexes produced by the Crusades, the female societies of the Beguines. About the thirteenth, they were joined by the male communities of the Beghards, whose oldest establishment, so far as is known, was founded in 1220 at Louvain; and then about the commencement of the following century, and at first around Antwerp, appeared the fellowships of the Lollards. All of them rapidly spread, and

in many localities, as for instance the Beguines in Cologne,[1] became uncommonly numerous.[2] These *prayer*-makers and chanters—for such is certainly the most correct interpretation of the words Beghards and Lollards—devoted their attention wholly to practical objects. For the most part they lived together in separate houses of their own, with the utmost simplicity, supported by the earnings of their manual industry and by charitable donations, and chiefly occupied with works of Christian benevolence. In these labours they not only manifested blamelessness of life, but did great good. They were, therefore, beloved by the people, gladly received by the towns, protected by princes and magistrates, and after a temporary oppression under Clement V., in the year 1311, were even sanctioned by the Popes, by John XXII. in 1318, by Gregory XI. in 1374 and 1377, and at a subsequent period by Sixtus IV. in 1472, and Julius II. in 1506, in so far at least as they strictly adhered to the creed of the Church, and harboured no heresies. The inquisitors and mendicant monks were the only parties who actually opposed, and here and there succeeded in stirring up persecution against them; though the clergy did not look upon them with favour, as they were the means of withdrawing part of their customary dues. Many families of distinction also were displeased with the Beguine establishments, as threatening to divert the more pious of their daughters from married life. This, however, would have done these establishments comparatively little harm. Their own inward declension, which followed in the course of time, injured them worst of all.

[1] Their numbers in this city, as early as 1250, amounted to above a thousand.

[2] The principal work respecting these Societies and small parties, is well known to be Mosheim de Beghardis et Beguinabus Commentarius ed. G. H. Martini. Lips. 1790. The material facts are succinctly brought together by Schroeckh Kirch. Gesch. xxxiii. s. 166 sq., by Gieseler, Kirch. Gesch. B. 2. Abtheil. 2. § 71. s. 370. and Abtheil. 3. § 113. s. 205., and by Engelhardt, Kirch. Gesch. B. 2. s. 311. Compare a passage about the devotional meetings of the Beghards and Beguines, from the Acts of Concil. Bitterense of the year 1299, given by Gieseler, Abtheil. 2. s. 373; and by Mosheim, p. 206. In the older works, the origin of these Fellowships is treated of by Joh. Bapt. Gramaye, in his Antwerpia Lib. ii. c. 6. p. 16; and in his Antiquitatt. Belgicis. Lovan. 1708 p. 18; also by Anton. Matthæi in the Analect. Med. Ævi. tom. i. p. 431.

Originally, the object of all these fellowships was serious, practical piety. On the whole, their spirit was praiseworthy and their regulations[1] strict. In the case of the Beguines, only females of good character could be admitted into the Society, and, at least according to an ordinance issued in 1244 for the archbishopric of Mayence, none under forty years of age. The novice, though she took no oath binding for life, was required to vow obedience and chastity, after which she entered into a new world, not of absolute monastic seclusion, but still of separation. The establishments of the Beguines (Beginasia), especially in the more important cities, were large and wealthy. In Mechlin, where several thousands of them resided, the Beginasium was surrounded by a ring-wall, and resembled a little town.[2] Within this enclosure a mode of life, of the most punctual kind, was maintained. At the head of the community was a mistress (Magistra), elected by the sisters, and empowered to punish the disobedient with imprisonment or stripes, and the licentious with dismissal. Their dress was uniform, consisting of a garment of coarse brown material and a white veil. They took their meals at a common table, and assembled daily at fixed hours for prayer and exhortation. The rest of the day was occupied actively, with manual labour and the care of the poor and sick. Each of the Sisters had a cell, and there was one common sleeping and dining apartment for all. The economy was managed by a Sister called, from her office, Martha, or, when necessary, by several; the general affairs by a clerical curator, and the whole was subject to the oversight of the civil magistrate. Every thing about this purer form of the institute recalls that of the Brethren of the Common Lot, and it is impossible to mistake the connection between them.

The rule observed by the Beghards was similar. Being unmarried tradesmen, and, like the Waldenses, chiefly weavers, they too lived together under a master (Magister), took their meals in common, and met daily at a fixed hour for devotional exercises and addresses. They, likewise, wore a particular dress of a

[1] These are fully detailed by Engelhardt K. Gesch. B. 2., s. 313, 314.

[2] See vol. i. p. 25, note 1st.

coarse stuff and dark colour, occupied themselves with handicrafts and works of charity, and earned the good opinion of the public by a usefulness like that of the Beguines. They do not, however, appear to have spread to the same extent, or acquired the same importance. The Lollards differed from the Beghards, less in reality, than in name. We are informed, respecting them, that at their origin in Antwerp, shortly after 1300, they associated together for the purpose of waiting upon patients dangerously sick and burying the dead.[1]

The reputation of these persons, at least of part of them, was very good. Gregory XI., in a bull of the year 1377,[2] recognizes among them such as lived humbly and honestly, in pureness of faith, decent raiment, poverty and chastity, and devoutly frequented the places of worship, and he will not hear of such obedient sons of the Church being subjected to trouble. Boniface IX., in a bull of 1394,[3] especially commends in them "that they receive into their domiciles the poor and wretched, and to the utmost of their power, practise other works of charity, inasmuch as, when required, they visit and wait upon the sick, minister to their wants, and also attend to the burial of the dead." Beghards and Lollards of this description had consequently nothing singular, schismatical, or sectarian about them; on the contrary, in connection with the Church, they performed the same duties which are now undertaken by the Sisters of Charity and other benevolent associations.

Very early however, an element of a different kind began to work in those fellowships. Even about the close of the 13th century irregularities and extravagances are laid to their charge. The council held at Bezieres[4] in 1299, complains that they excited the people by announcing the near approach of the end of the world,[5] that they introduced new and offensive observances and fasts, held unlawful meetings, assembled at night for preaching, under pretence that it was not properly for preaching, but

[1] See Gieseler, ii. 3, p. 206, 207.

[2] Mosheim, p. 401; Giesceler, ii. 3, s. 207.

[3] Mosheim, p. 653, Giesceler, ibid., s. 208.

[4] Martene Thes. Anecd. iv. 226: Mansi, xxiv. 1216. See also the extract from Giesceler, ii. 2, s. 373.

[5] . . . Praedicantium multis finem mundi instare, et jam adesse vel quasi *tempora Antichristi.*

only to converse about God and edify one another, that they met. It should be noted, however, that this refers to localities which had previously been central points of the Albigenses and Cathari, and where we may undoubtedly presume some remnants of heresy still lingered. At any rate, the piety of these societies, owing to their exclusively practical tendency, and destitution of sound and substantial knowledge, was of a kind to be easily kindled into enthusiasm; while, not being held together by any fixed rule or strict sequestration, they presented an open arena to the teachers of the most various sorts of false doctrine. In particular, the Apocalyptical party of the Franciscans, the Fratricelli, joined their ranks and transferred to them their enthusiasm and spirit of opposition, so that from the middle of the 14th century, Beghards and Fratricelli often appear undistinguishably blended together. In like manner, about the middle of the 13th century, the sect of the Free Spirit found access to them,[1] chiefly in Cologne and Swabia. We must, however, always distinguish betwixt the better sort of Beghards, and the heretical and schismatical, and no less betwixt those of them who led an orderly and industrious life and had a fixed place of abode, and those who strolled about and subsisted by beggary. It is only to the latter that the severe animadversions apply, which are made from various quarters, and by the most unprejudiced men, against the later Beghards.

CHAPTER SECOND.

DECLINE OF THE FELLOWSHIPS. THEIR PANTHEISTIC MYSTICISM. MASTER ECKART.

Before anything new and better of the kind could arise, it was requisite that the old societies should entirely fall to pieces, and thus have demonstrated their insufficiency. Their fall, took place in the course of the 14th century. The charges

[1] Mosheim, p. 198; Gieseler, ii. 2, s. 372.

brought against the later Beghards and Lollards, in connection, on the one hand, with the fanatical Franciscans, who were violently contending with the Church, and on the other, with the Brethren and Sisters of the Free Spirit, relate to three particulars, viz., an aversion to all useful industry, conjoined with a propensity to mendicancy and idleness, an intemperate spirit of opposition to the Church, and a sceptical and more or less pantheistical mysticism.

Mostly able-bodied persons in good health, but rude and ignorant, belonging to the lower orders, and peasants and mechanics by trade, they abandoned their temporal employments, and assuming a peculiar dress, with a cowl upon their heads, wandered about the country, seeking lodging in the houses of the Brethren and Sisters, holding secret meetings, propagating their doctrines, and living an indolent and comfortable life.[1] In this manner, in place of being any longer useful, by their industry, to the public, they became, by their sloth and mendicancy, a common plague; and for that reason are vehemently attacked, especially by the excellent Felix Hemmerlein, in several treatises.[2] At the same time the generality of them covertly, or openly, laboured at the subversion of the Church. Their unsound and exclusively inward bent of mind, and their repudiation of all law, necessarily brought them into the keenest opposition to the domineering legalism. They denounced it as corrupt, declared that the time of Antichrist was come, and on all hands endeavoured to embroil the people with their spiritual guides. Their own professed object was to restore the pure primeval state, the divine life of freedom, innocence, and nature. The idea they formed of that state was, that man, being in and of himself one with God, requires only to act in the consciousness of this unity, and to follow unrestrained the divinely implanted impulses and inclinations of his nature, in order to be good and godly; that prior to the fall he possessed such a consciousness to the full,

[1] See the account of the Beghards in Conrad of Montpellier's Fragment appended at the end, to Rainerius Contra Waldens. Ingolst. 1613; and in Biblioth. Pat. Lugd. xxv. 310. See extract in Gieseler, ii. 3, s. 269.

[2] e.g. Descriptio Lolhardorum—Contra validos mendicantes—Glossa bullarum per Beghardos impetratarum—Contra Anachoretas, Beghardos Beguinasque sylvestres. Sebastian Brant also vehemently opposed the Beghards and Lollards. See Supra vol. i. p. 189.

but that it had been disturbed by that event; that the law had introduced differences among mankind, who originally stood upon a level; but that these ought now to be done away, and the Paradise-state of unity and equality again restored. To bring this about, in defiance of the imposing power of the Church, the only way open to them was by secret societies and clandestine meetings. Accordingly they constructed for themselves remote, and often subterraneous habitations, which they called Paradises,[1] and where by night, and especially on the nights of festivals, persons of both sexes used to assemble. On such occasions, one of their apostles came forward, and taking off his clothes, and exemplifying in his own person the state of innocence, delivered a discourse upon the free intercourse of the sexes[2], which the law of marriage, contrary to nature, had supplanted. The sequel, if we may credit the reports, was of a kind which forbids description.

Even however, were the reports of this character, which frequently recur in ecclesiastical history, calumnious,[3] the doctrine of the later Beghards was of a sort which might easily lead to scenes of the kind as its ultimate consequences. That doctrine was the root of the evil, and what it was we have chiefly to consider. Owing to the care taken at first for its concealment, and to the want of credible sources of information, there is, no doubt, some difficulty in giving a full and authentic account of it. Still we are not left without a certain measure of correct knowledge respecting its radical type, and we have also in our power to give a tolerably satisfactory account of its principal varieties.

Its common basis was *mystical pantheism*, as that is to be found principally among the Brethren of the Free Spirit. Inasmuch, however, as during the whole of the middle age, the chief

[1] Wilhelmi Egmondani Chronic. in Matthæi vet. ævi. Anal. ii. 643. Sub terra quoddam mirabile habitaculum fecerant quod *Paradysum* vocabant.

[2] Ibid. Dictus itaque nudus praedicans, et omnes more innocentum, ad nuditatem exhortans, vario errore tam prima quam media nititur detegere etc.

[3] Respecting the length to which the sectarians of this period, and particularly the Beghards, actually went, see the examples and statements in Fuesslins Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie der Mittleren Zeit. B. 2. s. 20—22.

object of interest was not nature, but more predominantly man, contemplation was then directed less to the Divine being in the general universe, and almost exclusively to God in mankind, the former being adduced merely as a consequence or supplement to the latter.[1] The great thing was God in the mind or consciousness of man. Hence the Pantheism of these parties was not materialistic but idealistic. The creatures—so they supposed[2]—are in and of themselves a pure nullity.[3] God alone is the true being, the real substance of all things. God, however, is chiefly present where there is mind, and consequently in man. In the human soul there is an uncreated and eternal thing, viz., the *intellect.* That is the divine principle in man, in virtue of which he resembles, and is one with, God. Indeed, in as far as he purely exerts it, he is God himself, and it may be said of him, that whatever belongs to the divine nature belongs likewise, and in a perfect way, to the good and righteous man.[4] Such a man works the same works as God. With God he created the heavens and the earth, and with God he begot the eternal Word; and God without him can do nothing. Such a man was Christ. In Christ,

[1] Their fundamental principle, that God is the being of all beings, the only real existence, unavoidably led them to consider all things, without exception, as comprised in him, and even the meanest creature, as participant of the divine nature and life. And we find they did so. Nor can the opinion be more strongly expressed than was done by the Beghards who entered the Bishopric of Constance in 1339, and according to the account of John of Winterthur, (Thesaur. Script. Helv. p. 76.) taught, "The power of God is manifested in a louse as well as in a man." Fuesslin Ketzerhist. der Mittleren Zeit. ii. 21.

[2] This sketch of their doctrines is founded upon the propositions ascribed to them in two bulls of Pope John XXII. of 1329 and 1330. The Bulls are to be found in Raynaldi. Annal. ad ann. 1329 nro. 70, and in Eccardi Corp. Script. med. ævi. ii. 1035. See Mosheim de Beghard. p. 284. Gieseler ii. 3. s. 268. Though the terms in which the doctrines of the fanatics are here expressed, may not in every case be perfectly authentic, the substantial correctness of the delineation is confirmed by the fact that sentiments, on the whole identical, are to be found in the surviving writings of Eckart, the philosophical founder of the system.

[3] The 16th proposition, which, although not placed at the beginning, forms the basis of the whole system, is, Item quod omnes creaturæ sunt unum *pure* (purum) nihil.

[4] Item quod quicquid est proprium divinae naturæ, hoc totum proprium est homini justo et bono.

however, as a being both of divine and human nature, there was nothing peculiar or singular. On the contrary, what Holy Scripture affirms of him is likewise perfectly true of every righteous and good man.[1] The same divine things which the Father gave to the Son, he has also given to us, for the good man is the only begotten Son of God, whom the Father has begotten from all eternity. As for the question, what makes a man good and godly, it was answered substantially as follows. He becomes so when, like Christ, he makes his will conformable in all respects to the will of God, when forsaking all things, and renouncing all human wishes, desires, and endeavours, he so completely merges himself in, and gives himself up to, the Divine being, as to be wholly changed and transubstantiated into God, as the bread in the sacrament is into the body of Christ. To the man who is thus united with God, or to speak more properly, who recollects his primeval unity, all the differences and contrarities of life are done away. In whatever he is or does, though to others it may seem sin and evil, he is good and happy. For the essential property of the Divine nature is, that it excludes all differences. God is neither good nor bad.[2] To call him good, would just be like calling white black. His glory is equally revealed in all things, yea, even in all evil, whether of guilt or penalty. Hence, if it be his will, that I should sin, whatever the sin may be, I ought not to wish not to have committed it; and to be sensible of this is the only true repentance. But the will of God is manifested by the disposition which a man feels towards a particular action. Hence, though he may have committed a thousand mortal sins, still, supposing him to have been disposed for them, he ought not to wish not to have committed them.[3] Neither, to speak strictly, has God enjoined external acts. No external act is good or godly, and on such an act no influence is exerted by God, but all depends upon the union of the mind with him. That being the case, man ought not to desire or pray for anything, save what God ordains. Who-

[1] Item quod quicquid dicit S. Scriptura de Christo hoc totum verificatur etiam de quolibet homine justo et bono.

[2] Deus neque bonus est neque malus, sed nec optimus: et tam male dictum est, Deum esse bonum, sicut dicere album esse nigrum.

[3] Si homo commisisset mille peccata mortalia, *si homo esset ad talia dispositus*, non deberet se velle ea non commisisse.

ever prays to God for a particular blessing, prays for a wrong thing and in a wrong way, for he prays for a thing contrary to God's nature. For this reason a man ought well to consider, whether he should wish to receive any boon from God, because, in that case, he would be his *inferior*, like a servant or slave, and God, in giving it, would be *something apart* from him. But this should not take place in the life eternal: there we should rather reign with him. God is truly glorified only in those who do not strive after property, honour or profit, piety or holiness, recompense or the kingdom of heaven, but who have wholly renounced all such things.

Such in general was the doctrine of the fanatical Beghards, as well as of the Brethren of the Free Spirit and the later Cathari, sects related to, and often co-mingled with them. The common views, however, split into various ramifications, which in the fermenting mass of parties it may be difficult, but will at least reward the pains, to attempt to distinguish. We have a passage from the celebrated *Ruysbroek*, which introduces some degree of order into the confusion.[1] This person, himself one of the patriarchs of mysticism, though of quite another kind of it, considers as the objectionable part of such systems, not that they maintained the unity of the godly man with God—for therein he perfectly agrees with them—but that they represented that unity as *natural*, a result emanating directly from man's very being, whereas it can be brought about only by a recreative and transforming process of Divine grace. He designates[2] as their common and fundamental error, "that rising no higher than bare and unclothed nature, without the grace of God and any virtues above reason, they retire into their own essence and there find inaction and rest, and a nakedness without form. "No doubt they reckon themselves," he says, "very wise and holy; but as they have not been baptised with the Divine Spirit and true love, they do not find God and his kingdom, but only their own essence, and a formless repose, in which, as they fancy, they enjoy felicity." This radical error, however,

[1] *Engelhardt* Richard von St. Victor and Joh. Ruysbroek, Erl. 1838 s. 225—228.

[2] Engelhardt, ibid. p. 225.

according to *Ruysbroek's* further delineation, manifested itself in a fourfold form. It took a direction either against the Holy Ghost, or against the Father, or against the Son, or generally, against God and the Church.

The doctrine of those first mentioned by *Ruysbroek*, as heretics against the Holy Ghost, would, according to our mode of speech, be designated *Pantheistic quietism*. It consisted in their placing themselves above the active and operative element in the Deity, viz., the Holy Spirit, and in claiming a perfect identity with the absolute, which reposes in itself, and is without act or operation. They said, as *Ruysbroek* reports, that they were themselves the divine essence, above the persons of the Godhead, and in as absolute a state of repose, as if they did not at all exist, inasmuch as the Godhead itself does not act, the Holy Ghost being the sole operative power in it. They therefore deemed themselves superior to the Holy Ghost, and believed that they did not need his grace, and indeed that neither God nor any creature could either give to them or take from them,—that in heaven there are no differences or degrees, but a single, simple, blessed, and actionless existence (the undistinguishable and impredicable existence),—that from this existence, or God, their soul had derived its origin, and after death, will return to it again,—and that, at the end, God himself will become the one and absolutely quiescent Being. "These persons," says Ruysbroek, "in thus contemning all thought, knowledge, love, and volition, are only seeking an entire freedom from all things, and that (pure negation) is to them real poverty of spirit and blessedness."

The second class, as formed by Ruysbroek, we may call *Pantheistic Realists*. They placed themselves simply and directly on an equality with God, contemplated their "I" as so entirely one with the Divinity as to fancy that from it, being identical with the creative power, all things have proceeded. It was their opinion that, being by nature God, they had come into existence by their own free will. "If I had not so willed," was the language of this class, "neither I nor any other creature would ever have existed at all. God knows, wills, and can do nothing without me; heaven and earth hang upon my hand. The glory given to God is also paid to me; for I am by nature essentially

God. There are no persons in God. But only one God exists, and with him, I am, that self-same one which he is."

To the third class the modern designation of *panchristismus*, may perhaps be applicable. It included those who put themselves upon a level with Christ, according to his divine and human nature. "What Christ is," was, according to Ruysbroek, the language they held, "that I also am, being, in respect of my divinity, begotten of the Father, and as a man, begotten in time. All God's gifts to him are also conferred upon me. He was sent into this life of action for my service, to live and to die for me. I am sent into this life of contemplation, which is a still more exalted kind of life, and to which Christ would also have attained, had he continued longer upon the earth. All honour due to him belongs likewise to me and to all the contemplative. In the sacrament, I am elevated along with him in the host, for with him I am one flesh and one blood, an inseparable person."

Finally, the fourth class, whose creed was pure *nihilism*, inasmuch as they set themselves on a level with the absolute nullity, had, according to Ruysbroek, the peculiarity, that those belonging to it, despised alike the finite and the infinite, contemplation, knowledge, love, all the exercises and ordinances of the Church, such as the sacraments, the gospels, the life of Christ, his suffering and work of redemption, in short, whatever others considered sacred. Contemning even the life eternal, they soared above themselves and all created things, above God and Godhead, maintaining that neither God nor themselves, neither action nor rest, neither good nor evil, blessedness nor perdition, have any existence. They seemed to have wholly lost themselves, and to have become that *nullity* which they believed God to be.

One might feel inclined to regard these characteristics of Ruysbroek, especially what he says of the *Nihilists*, as exaggerated. And, it is true, Ruysbroek, was no historian or critic. But when we weigh, on the one hand, the energy and extravagance of the middle age, and, upon the other, its whole educational condition, we must admit that, after once forsaking the ground of a sound Christian faith in God, and occupying that of Pantheism, the abettors of the latter might easily, in this, as

in other cases, follow it to its utmost and most extravagant consequences, until at last they reached spiritual self-annihilation.[1] On the supposition, however, that in these delineations there is something half-aprocryphal, we offer, in conclusion, a review of the system of a man who has exalted the popular doctrines of the pantheistical mystics from the sphere of rude conception to that of speculation,[2] and of whose true meaning there can be no mistake, as it is declared in writings which we still possess.[3] We point to Master *Eckart*, so highly extolled by the disciples of modern speculative philosophy.

Henry *Eckart*, or Ekkard, is one of the most remarkable men of the mediæval period, but, as in the case of so many of the same age, we know much less of what he was, than of what he did. His life is involved in almost total obscurity.[4] The date of his birth is unknown; also whether it took place in Strasburg, or in Saxony;[5] and not less the particular incidents of his history and the year of his death. We only know that he studied and taught in Paris;[6] that in the contest between Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair, he espoused the side of the Pope, and was made Doctor of Theology at Rome; that he was a Dominican monk and provincial of the order in Saxony, Bohemia, and the Rhine country; that he laboured as a powerful and impressive preacher, espe-

[1] Even in Suso, who also was connected with these fanatical parties, we find the statement, "We lose ourselves, in the *eternal nothing that is in God*." Auserles. Lebensbeschreibungen heiliger Seelen B. 3. s. 152. Fuesslin's Ketzerhist. ii. 26.

[2] An excellent view of the system of Master Eckart by Dr C. Schmidt, now Professor in Strasburg, has been given in the Theolog. Stud. und Krit. 1839. 3. s. 663—774. Comp. Gieseler, K. G. ii. 2. s. 630 sq.

[3] On Eckart's writings, see Schmidt ibid. s. 670—687. Tritheim de Script. Eccl. c. 537. p. 130. The principal are the Expositio super Evangelium Johannis, Predigten, and probably the Treatise von "den neuen Felsen." (Gieseler K. Gesch. ii. 2. 630, note hh.)

[4] The little we know of it is stated by Schmidt, ibid. s. 664—670.

[5] Peter Noviomagus, in the preface to the works of Tauler, (Köln. 1543) calls him Dr Eckart of Strassburg. The Dominicans, Quétif and Echard (Script. ord. Praedic. Par. 1719. 1. 507), with more probability, assign Saxony as the place of his birth. Trithemius says generally, natione Teutonicus.

[6] As professor in the college of St Jacques.

cially in Cologne,[1] where, if not at an earlier period in Paris or some other place, he came into connection with the Pantheistic and mystical Beghards, and elaborated their doctrines into a speculative system. This system resembles the dome of the city in which he lived, towering aloft like a giant, or rather like a Titan assaulting heaven, and is for us of the highest importance. Not unacquainted with the Aristotelian Scholasticism,[2] but more attracted by Plato, "the great priest," as he calls him,[3] and his Alexandrian followers, imbued with the mystical element in the works of Augustine, though not with his doctrine of original sin, and setting out from the foundations laid by the Areopagite, Scotus Erigena, and by the earlier mystics of the middle ages, but adhering still more closely to the pantheistic doctrines which Amalric von Bena and David of Dinant had transferred to the sect of the Free Spirit and to a part of the Beghards, Master Eckart,[4] with great originality, constructed out of these elements a system which he did not expressly design to contradict the creed of the Church, but which, nevertheless, by using its formulas as mere allegories and symbols of speculative ideas, combats it in its foundations,[5] and is to be regarded as the most important mediæval prelude to the pantheistic speculation of modern times.

Eckart's fundamental notion is God's eternal efflux from himself, and no less eternal reflux into himself, the procession of the creature from God, and the return of the creature, by self-denial and elevation above all that is of a created nature, back into God again. This fundamental notion, however, including the double aspect of theoretical pantheism and practical mysticism, is unfolded in the following main propositions.[6] God is the Being, that is, the solid, true, universal, and necessary being. He

[1] Trithemius : prædicando famosissimus est habitus.

[2] Trithemius designates him as, in philosophia Aristotelica omnium suo tempore doctissimus. De Scriptor. Eccl. c. 537, p. 130.

[3] Schmidt in l. c. s. 688.

[4] Trithemius applauds him as ingenio subtilis et clarus eloquio.

[5] . . . Dum nimis philosophiam insequens, *novitatem terminorum contra theologorum consuetudinem ubique curiose immiscuit*, variosque errores induxit—says Trithemius. He adds, however, in the sequel: Nihilominus ubi *Catholice* scripsit, satis *profunda* et utilia dogmata dedit.

[6] Developed fully by Schmidt, in l. c. s. 687—733.

alone exists, for he has the existence of all things in himself.[1] All out of him is semblance,[2] and *exists* only in as far as it is in God, or is God.[3] The nature of God, exalted above every relation or mode *(weise)*, and for that reason unutterable and nameless, is, not however, mere abstract being (according to the doctrine of Amalric), or dead substance; but it is spirit, the highest reason, thinking, knowing, and making itself known. The property most peculiar to God is thinking,[4] and it is by exerting it upon himself that he first becomes God; then the Godhead—the hidden darkness—the simple and silent basis of the Divine Being actually is God.[5] God proceeds out of himself, and this is the eternal generation of the Son, and is necessarily founded in the Divine essence. In the Son, or creative word, however, God also gives birth to all things, and as his operation, being identical with his thinking, is without time, so creation takes place in an "everlasting now."[6] God has no existence without the world, and the world, being his existence in another mode, is eternal with him.[7] The creatures, although they be in a manner set out of God, are yet not separated from him; for otherwise God would be bounded by something external to himself. Much more the distinction in God is one which is continually doing itself away. By the Son, who is one with God, all things are in God, and that which is in God is God himself.[8] In this manner it may be affirmed that "all things are God," as truly as that "God is

[1] "Being is a primal name, all that is frail is a lapse from Being."

[2] "All creatures are in themselves nothing," or, "are a pure nullity."

[3] "He has the being of all creatures in him; He is a Being who has all being in him." In the same sense the *Deutsche Theologie*, cap. 34, "God is the being of all beings."

[4] "The Lord is a living, existing, acting, and self-comprehending rationality."

[5] The godhead, originally "hidden darkness," becomes God by acting and going forth: "Working and not working, constitutes the distinction between God and Godhead."

[6] See Schmidt in l. c. s. 695.

[7] "Before the creatures were made God was not God."

[8] He is a pure existence in himself, which is neither this nor that, for what is in God is God.

all things."[1] In this sense also, every created object, as being in God, is good.

According to this the whole creation is a manifestation of the Deity; every creature bears upon it a "stamp of the Divine nature," a reflection of the eternal godhead; indeed, every creature is "full of God."[2] All that is divine, however, when situate forth of the Divine Being, necessarily strives to return back to its source, seeks to lay aside its finitude, and from a state of division to re-enter into unity. Hence all created things have a deep and painful yearning after union with God, in untroubled rest.[3] It is only when God, after having, by the Son, passed out of himself into a different mode of existence, returns by love, which is the Holy Spirit, into himself once more, that the Divine Being is perfected in the Trinity, and he "rests with himself and with all the creatures."[4]

Although God reveals himself in all things, still, being essentially spirit and thought, he reveals himself mainly in the spirit, and in the rational creatures, and consequently in man. The spirit knows and recognises itself only in the spirit, and so does the infinite Spirit, in so far as he has taken upon himself finitude, only in the finite one; "his knowing is my knowing."[5] God attains to consciousness in man, and man knows God by God. "Simple people fancy they ought to see God as if He stood, He on that side and they on this; but this is a mistake, God and I are one by cognition."[6] It is only requisite that man should become conscious of this unity with God, and live in it. In man there are two essential faculties, viz., thought and volition; the latter is subordinate, the soul's most inward and peculiar nature being thought, spirit, rationality, the uncreated spark, the unextinguishable light.[7] In

[1] Schmidt s. 697.

[2] "Every creature is full of God." . . . "Here all blades of grass, and wood, and stone, and all things, are one."

[3] "All creatures seek for something God-like." All seek their "natural condition." And had Eckart been asked for what purpose all the creatures were created, he would have said "for rest," and again "for rest," and a third time "for rest."

[4] Schmidt, s. 702.

[5] Ibid. s. 704.

[6] Ibid. s. 705. Note 52.

[7] "The soul has something in it, a spark of reason, which is never extinguished." . . . "Rationality is the highest part of the soul."

it man bears immediately the image of God; by this "deiform" power, which no created thing satisfies, he enters into such a union with God, as neither understanding, nor love, nor volition, can attain to.[1]

The uncreated light, the perfect apprehension of God, is, however, hindered by what is bodily, multiplex, and temporal. In order to overcome these restraints, God has revealed himself to man, and has appeared in the flesh.[2] Christ, perfectly one with God, and conscious of his unity, was God's only-begotten Son, and the substance of the revelation which was perfected in him, consists in this, that every one who penetrates to as pure a union with God, is like him, a Son of God, and essentially the self-same Son as he, "What the Son has revealed to us from the Father is, that the same Son are we."[3]

But although union with God is effected mainly by thinking and consciousness, still it also requires a corresponding act of the will, something practical, such as self-denial, and privation, by which man rises above all that is finite. Not only must he lay aside all created things, the world and earthly good, and mortify desire,[4] but more than all he must resign his "I," reduce himself to nothing,[5] and become what he was, before he issued forth into this temporal state. Nay, man must rise above the chief good, above virtue, piety, blessedness, and God himself, as things external and superior to his spirit, and it is only when he has thus annihilated[6] self and all that is not God within him, that nothing remains except the pure and simple divine essence, in which all division is brought into absolute unity. In this way certainly Eckart becomes ascetical, and enjoins patience, poverty of spirit, and purity of heart. With him, however, knowledge is always

[1] Schmidt, s. 706—710. [2] Ibid. s. 710, sq.

[3] Ibid. s. 711. Note 70.

[4] "He, to whom transitory things are not little, and as it were nonentities, does not find God."

[5] "If God is to make anything with thee and in thee, thou must have become nothing."

[6] According to Eckart, we must seek God "*one weise*" under no particular mode. Then only do we receive him "as he is in himself." They who still seek him outwardly, may be regarded as holy by men, but inwardly they are asses, for they do not understand the difference of divine truth."

first in order, and of chief importance, and in it lies the kernel of eternal salvation.[1]

A man who has reached this stage is in the state of innocence and righteousness. He needs no longer to ask or to receive from God, as if he were either separate from or inferior to him. There is no longer any difference between his will and God's, nor would it be he who sinned, were God to will that sin should be committed by him.[2] Such a man also enjoys the highest freedom. Disconnected with all persons and things, without either the desire of heaven or the fear of hell, he loves all things only in God, and all alike. Neither does he any longer ask, What is the will of God? For between his will and God's there is no more any distinction; they are one and the same. But that which God wills in man is that which man has the strongest inclination to do, and to which he inwardly feels himself most forcibly impelled,[3] and hence man requires—this is the dangerous doctrine of the Sect of the Free Spirit—only to follow the voice within, in order to execute the divine will. Nor can it be otherwise. For man is now like God, "if God be righteousness, and therefore he who is in righteousness is in God, and is God himself."[4]

In this manner, all distinction between the soul and the only-begotten Son being done away, and the Spirit which once emanated from God being returned to God again, the mystery of the Trinity is constantly renewed in every righteous man. He is the same being, the same substance and nature as God himself, he not existing without God, nor God without him; and it is in his power to say, "If I were not, God would not be—He can as little want me as I Him."[5] Yea, in the consciousness of this indissoluble oneness, man might even defy God. If the righteous

[1] "On this my salvation solely depends, that God is rational, and that I recognise him to be so." Schmidt, s. 718. Note 88.

[2] Ibid. s. 719. sq.

[3] "If we would follow after what God wills us, we should follow after that to which we are inclined and most strongly bent upon and disposed to. Were man to follow that, God would give him the most in that which is least, and with that he would never part." Schmidt, s. 724. Note 105.

[4] Ibid. s. 725 and 726. Esp. note 111.

[5] Ibid. s. 729. Note 120.

man willed any thing, and it were possible for God not to will it, the righteous man would nevertheless be obliged to prosecute what he perceived to be the true will of the infinite Spirit, and the essence of righteousness, and "not care a bean for God."[1] But for such a spiritual and divine man, all external things, morality and usage, all the means of striving after holiness and salvation, are perfectly indifferent. He is exempt from all sin, and exalted above the outward ordinances of the Church and the State.[2]

Thus in the hands of Eckart, mistaking, as like all Pantheists he did, the reality and (relative) independence of created persons and the true nature of freedom and sin, of redemption and grace, the simple proposition, that God is the only existent and true being, and the creature in and of itself nothing, was by a process of onesided ratiocination, and an exclusive conception of man as a mere thinking machine, developed into a system terminating at its summit in an absolute deification of self and of reason, nay, in a Titan-like defiance of God. And even if he did not openly preach antinomianism, still his doctrine could not but promote an indifference to the prevailing laws and an inward renunciation of them, and in persons of a less intellectual and profound nature produce effects morally the most destructive. At the same time the penetration and boldness of his genius, as well as the deep piety of his nature, must be fully acknowledged. Only it might perhaps be premature, on the score of the latter qualification, to class him, as Arnold[3] has done, *with the precursors of the Reformation.*

Such were the doctrines of the later Beghards,—such the shape given to them by Eckart, as the most sublime which even speculation could devise. Taken in connection with the practical licentiousness to which we have already adverted, it was natural that they should provoke hostile measures on the part of the Church. At Cologne, the great gathering-

[1] Schmidt, s. 733. Note 126. "The righteous man is therefore in earnest about righteousness. Were it the case that God was not righteous, he would not care a bean for him."

[2] Ibid. note 128.

[3] Hist. Theol. Myst. Francof. 1702, p. 306

place for all kinds of opinions during the middle ages, the first trace of their hypocritical proceedings was detected. A husband, stealing in disguise after his wife, who was in league with the Beghards, discovered their paradise, and informed against them. Many were punished, committed to the flames, and drowned in the Rhine.[1] This took place about 1325, three years after Walter,[2] one of the heads of their party, had been burned to death. Nevertheless, they still secretly upheld their societies; and ere long Eckart, the provincial of the Dominicans, of whom we have just given a sketch, professed himself a proselyte to their opinions. No doubt a man possessed of his sagacity, and so celebrated for the strictness of his virtue,[3] could not participate in the immorality and manifest antinomianism of the sectarians; but there was even less reason to doubt that his opinions were contrary to those of the Church, and dangerous to morals. The consequence was, that on the 27th March, 1329, John XXII. emitted a bull, in which these opinions were condemned.[4] Even, however, at a still later period, about 1335 and 1357, and indeed during the whole 14th century, traces of the Beghards are to be found, particularly at Cologne, but also at Strasburg, Constance, Speyer, Madgeburg, Erfurt, Lubeck, and other places.[5] Everywhere they were involved in opposition to the Church, and the Church in an exterminating war against them.

But besides this reaction, which might have been expected from the hierarchical orthodoxy of the Church, they encountered another from a better sort of *mysticism* which reared itself on the basis of Christian *theism*. Originally of a contemplative character, and though not absolutely the offspring, still in a greatly

[1] Chronik des Wilhelm von Egmont in Matthæi vet. aev. Anal. ii. 643. Schmidt in l. c. s. 668.

[2] Trithemii Chron. Hirsaug. ii. 155.

[3] So the Dominicans *Quètif* and *Echard*, on the authority of older authors, in the Script. Ord. Præd. i. 507 and 508. Schmidt speaks in a different sense in l. c. s. 744.

[4] Schmidt in l. c. s. 668 and 669. The bull is to be found in Raynaldi Ann. xv. 389, Nro. 70, and in D'Argentrè Collect. i.312. In the following year John XXII. issued a new bull against the German Beghards, *Eccardi* corpus histor. med. ævi. ii. 1036. In the same year the Theologians of Heidelberg condemned the doctrines of Eckart. Trithem. de Script. Eccl. c. 537.

[5] References in Gieseler ii. 3. s. 267.

less degree the adversary of the Church, this theistical mysticism forms a middle link between the heretical doctrines of the Beghards and those professed by the ecclesiastical Mystics; while, at the same time, it is the commencement of that remarkable series of evolutions exhibited in the Brethren of the Common Lot, among whom the contemplative mysticism was refined into the practical, and the pious spirit of association, originally evoked by Beguines and Beghards, obtained a purer and a nobler form.

CHAPTER THIRD.

TRANSITION TO THE BRETHREN OF THE COMMON LOT. JOHN RUYSBROEK.

The chief representative of that *theistical*, but still predominantly contemplative and transcendental *Mysticism*, is *Ruysbroek*, a highly influential man. From his day, and by his means, the mystical tendency in the Netherlands and Germany underwent a revolution, and purified itself in higher and higher degrees, until it produced the noblest specimens of Christian character and life. He has all that was good in the pious societies of the preceding ages, without their defects and corruptions. He shares the warmth and deep feeling of their mysticism, while he contends against their pantheism and antinomianism. Like them he endeavours after Apostolicity, but seeks it not so much in external forms as rather in the spirit, and in the whole tenor of the life. He judges freely of the faults of the existing Church, but in place of betraying him into enmity or destructive opposition, they only beget in him the inclination to reform it. Even he, however, is still in certain things restrained and kept back. There are false and unsound ingredients, a taint of the carnal and fanatical in his mysticism. As yet he is destitute of a practical spirit, and takes no interest in science and the liberal culture of the mind. It was therefore requisite that his system of opinions should be resolved into a still higher one, comprehending these elements; and this we see effected, and partly by his instrumen-

tality, in the Brethren of the Common Lot, or at least taking its rise out of their institutions.

We shall begin with a brief narrative of *Ruysbroek's* life; and then proceed to our chief object, which is to sketch his doctrine as a mystic, and his views as a Reformer. There will be occasion to revert to him in the sequel of the history, when shewing the influence he exercised personally upon Gerhard Groot, and by means of his monastic institutions, upon the Brotherhood of the Common Lot.

The priest and canon, John,[1] with whose family name we are unacquainted, commonly bears that of Ruysbroek,[2] from a village situate upon the Senne, betwixt Brussels and Hall, where he was born about the year 1293. Trithemius says that he was a German by birth. But it was in a higher sense that he belonged to that nation, for he followed the intellectual current which then prevailed in its Theology, and in turn exercised a great influence upon it, through Tauler and others. He was put to school at the age of eleven, by one of his relations, who was a canon at Brussels, and attended it for four years. In what place he further pursued his studies is unknown. From early youth, he devoted himself more to the cultivation of piety than to the pursuit of knowledge, and

[1] The life of Ruysbroek is treated of by Trithemius de Script. Eccl. c. 672. p, 157; by an unknown canon in Surius' Edition of Ruysbroek's Werken, Köln 1692. s. 1—8, Val. Andreae Biblioth. Belgica, p. 555. Foppen's Bibl. Belg. ii. 720. Fabricii Bibl. Med. et inf. Lat. iv. 127. Schroeckh's K. Gesch. 34, 274, and especially in the Monography by Engelhardt, Richard v. St. Victor and John Ruysbroek, Erlangen 1838, s. 167—170, and again s. 325.

[2] The name is written in very various ways: Rusbrock, Rusbroch, Ruysbroch, Ruysebröck, Rüsebruch, Reisbruch, and even Rusber, (in an old French edition.) I have adopted the form preferred by Engelhardt. But it may be doubted if that which, according to Foppen's, is still to be found upon his tomb, viz, Ruysebroek, be not the more correct.

[3] Trithemius says: Vir (ut ferunt) devotus, sed parum literatus. Andreæ: Vir divinæ contemplationi addictissimus, et sanctitatis majoris quam doctrinæ. Ruysbroek is greatly extolled for his insight and deep piety by Gottfr. Arnold in his Kirch. und Ketzer-Gesch. i. 553, and in his Gesch. der Myst. Theol. K. 21. s. 412. Arnold has translated largely from Ruysbroeck's writings. See the sequel.

almost all the older writers remark, that he was rather devout than learned. Piety was also the power which he was to employ in inflaming the hearts of men, and producing most important results. In his 24th year he received priests' orders, and about the same time, or shortly after, was appointed vicar of the Church of St Gudule, in Brussels. Even at this period he had attracted observation by his fondness for quietude, retirement, and contemplation. He was seen, as Plato in the Symposium tells us of Socrates, walking along the streets of Brussels, unconcerned at the bustle around him, and absorbed in profound meditation. Two laymen one day observing him as he passed, said the one, "O were I but as holy as that priest!"—the other in reply, "Not for all the world, for then I should never have another happy day." Ruysbroek, who overheard them, said to himself, "Little do you know the sweetness experienced by those who taste the Spirit of the Lord!" So rigidly did he carry out his notions of sequestration, as to refuse to admit even his mother, when, attracted by the fame of her son, she came to Brussels to see him. At the same time Ruysbroek distinguished genuine piety from fanaticism. There was then a lady in Brussels, probably a Beguine, or Sister of the Free Spirit, whom numbers followed, and who enjoyed so high a reputation for sanctity, that the multitude believed that in going to the communion, she was attended by two seraphim. Several doctors had vainly entered the lists with the fanatic; but Ruysbroek at last succeeded in refuting her. This is the first instance of the conflicts with false and free-thinking mysticism, which he afterwards waged in various ways, and even with his pen.

Up to his sixtieth year, Ruysbroek had applied himself, with acknowledged zeal, to the duties of a secular priest. At that stage of his life his strong innate bent to contemplation obtained the ascendancy; and accompanied by several friends, he retired into the Monastery of Grünthal. This monastery, belonging to a newly instituted community of regular Canons of St Augustine, was situate two miles from Brussels, in a great beech forest—Sonjenbosch—at whose southern extremity lies Waterloo, so famous in modern history. Under Provost Franco, Ruysbroek was appointed the first prior[1] of the

[1] Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 555.

institution, and became the author of a Reformation among the Canons, which extended far and wide over the Netherlands. Wholly devoted to contemplation, as we are informed by one of the fellows of the Order, he loved, when the spirit came upon him, to plunge into the loneliest recesses of the beautiful forest surrounding the monastery. There, on a tablet of wax, he noted down the suggestions of his mind, and afterwards, at home, extended the draught.[1] Sometimes, for want of grace, there would be an interruption to his writing for whole weeks. On resuming it, however, he at once recovered the thread; as, we are told, used also to be the case with Plotinus, another man of contemplation. In this manner, under the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, as he himself believed, and as was indicated by the name of *ecstatic teacher* which he received, originated his numerous writings, some in the dialect of Brabant, and others in Latin.[2]

At Grünthal, Ruysbroek received the visits of Tauler and Gerhard Groot. On both he made a deep impression, and by means of both, although in different ways, exerted a greater influence upon posterity than even by his writings. But multitudes of people of every age and rank, chiefly from Flanders and the Rhine countries as far as Basle, also came as pilgrims to the holy father, and far-famed teacher of the self-denying love of God. All were edified and inflamed; and many, especially females, were gained over to the contemplative life. His fame did not make him proud. He was gentle, modest, friendly, and sympathizing, submitted, with the utmost strictness, to manual labour, fasts, and vigils, and performed the humblest duties of the monastery. It was not until he had reached a great age, that he took the help of an amanuensis in writing his essays. He was

[1] Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 556.

[2] Trithemius, Scripsit patrio sermone ad ædificationem simplicium quaedam opuscula, quæ per alium post ejus mortem in Latinum conversa, in certis optima, in quibusdam vero a doctoribus (J. Gerson) feruntur esse erronea. The first who translated them into Latin was Gerhard Groot, the second, Laurentius Surius (Edd. Köln 1552, 1609, and 1692). They were translated into German by Gottfr. Arnold, Offenbach. 1701. The principal are entitled, De ornatu nuptiarum spiritualium—De profectu religiosorum—Commentaria in Tabernaculum foederis—Speculum æternæ salutis—De septem gradibus amoris—De quatuor tentationibus—De calculo—De vera contemplatione—See Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 556. Foppens ii. 721. Engelhardt s. 172.

so practised in contemplation, that he could give himself up to it at any moment, and while administering the mass, his devotion was so intense as sometimes wholly to overpower him.

In this manner, the life of Ruysbroek, as of most men of the same sort, flowed gently, cheerfully, and silently on. His symplicity and temperance prolonged it to extreme old age. At last, however, he longed for his dissolution, and is said to have foretold the day on which it would take place. He expired on the 2d of Dec. 1381, in the 88th year of his age, and the 64th of his priesthood, and was interred in the church of his monastery. A stone, with a simple inscription, marked the place.[1]

As the life of Ruysbroek furnished few historical materials, his importance as a religious character led to its being abundantly embellished by fable. The following traits of this sort have been handed down.[2] His mother having gone to Brussels to see him, and being unable to accomplish her purpose, entered a religious community in the hope of thereby coming into closer connection with him. Even this expedient was unavailing; and she became at last satisfied with mere spiritual fellowship. After her decease, she repeatedly appeared to her son while he was engaged in prayer on her behalf, and earnestly entreated him to rescue her from the pains of Purgatory. He did it, by the means she had herself suggested—viz., the first mass in which he officiated as priest. In particular, Ruysbroek's inward conflicts, and the depth and sublimity of his contemplation, were illustrated by legends. As the story goes, he was often haunted by the Devil in the shape of a hideous monster. But Christ also visited him, and upon one occasion accompanied by the Queen of Heaven and all the saints, when he addressed to him the words, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[3] The intense glow of his devotion was shadowed forth in the following narrative. On one occasion the brethren sought for him long in the solitude of

[1] Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 557. See the inscription in Foppens, ii. 722.

[2] Collected from the old biography by Engelhardt, s. 325. sq.

[3] Tradition, it is well-known, relates something of the same kind respecting Thomas Aquinas, to whom a crucifix once addressed the words, *Recte de me scripsisti, Thoma!* The taste of the mediæval period, was for the marvellous, the symbolical, and the palpable.

the forest, where he was fond of tarrying. At last one of them beheld a tree, apparently enveloped in flames, while at the foot of it sat Ruysbroek, wholly absorbed in meditation.

The doctrines of this remarkable man, the patriarch of the Netherland and German mystics, have recently been fully and ably compiled.[1] We refer to that delineation, and have only extracted from it the most material parts. Ruysbroek sets out with the Divine Being; he then comes down to man; and, finally, as the great end of his speculations, shews how man may become one with God, without losing his independent existence or dissolving into the Divinity. God[2] is the super-essential essence of all being, eternally reposing in himself, and yet at the sametime, the living and moving principle of all that he has created. In respect of his substance, He is everlasting rest, in which there is neither time nor place, neither before nor after, neither desire nor possession, neither light nor darkness. He manifests himself, however, in eternal actions of knowledge, volition, and love, which are also constituents of his nature. Reposing in his substance, he is at the same time eternally active and influential upon nature, and both his rest and action are filled with simple and transparent brightness. This God is one in his nature, and triune in his persons. In virtue of the oneness of his nature, He remains eternally in himself. In virtue of the trinity of his persons, which are distinct not merely in our conception, but also in reality, he is full of life and productive through all eternity. Nature cannot exist without persons, and these have their subsistence in nature. The Father is the eternal, essential, and personal principle. He begets eternal wisdom, the Son, his uncreated and personal image. From the mutual intuition of the two, there flows an everlasting complacency, a fire of love which burns for ever between Father and Son, and this is the Holy Spirit, the third person, who continually proceeds from the Father and the Son, and returns into the nature of the Godhead. Such is the life of God in himself and

[1] In the monography by Engelhardt, p. 173—264. Compare also De Wette's Sittenlehre i. 2. s. 237.

[2] In *Engelhardt*, s. 173—177.

with himself. Resting in his substance, active in his persons, he knows, loves, possesses, and enjoys himself far above all the creatures. At the same time, however, he also constantly operates in an outward direction. And the chief acts of this operation are creation, redemption, the eternal self-communication of God by his Spirit.

In virtue of his most free will, God by his eternal wisdom brought forth the universe—heaven and earth—from nothing.[1] From the Empyræan heaven, the dwelling-place of the Divine Majesty, and of angels and saints, creation descends, through the stages of the crystal heavens and firmament, to the earth, the abode of man. Man is formed of two opposite natures: According to the body he is mortal, like the brutes, according to the soul, endowed with eternal life, and like the angels above the firmament. He is hence dying upon earth but living in heaven, humbler than God, but yet like him, being his image and figure. The soul, intellectual, rational, and immortal, possesses three radical powers, which are memory, intellect, and will. By the last it can choose betwixt good and evil; but has still above it God and his grace. When the three faculties are filled with grace, we can do all things, and become like unto God, after whose image we were made. For, however diverse may be the temperaments of men—As sons of nature, situate beneath the planets, they are partly cold and unloving men of Saturn, partly warm and glowing men of Jupiter, partly haughty men of Mars, partly highly-gifted and amiable men of the Sun, partly frivolous men of Venus, and mirthful men of Mercury,[2]—however great these their natural diversities may be, they all coincide in one respect, that they are destined for, and susceptible of, a higher intellectual life in fellowship with God. The qualification for this lies, in the first instance, in the freedom of the will, which, if he but obey it, always incites a man to good, and restrains him from evil. "Will humility and love," says Ruysbroek, "and you possess them; God himself cannot take them from you."[3] In order,

[1] Engelhardt, s. 179—190.

[2] Ibid. s. 183 and 184.

[3] Ibid. s. 187. Compare Ruysbroek's sentiments expressed to two Parisian clergymen, s. 169. Freedom, humility, and love, are in his view the highest spiritual blessings. "To descend into humility is

however, that nature may rise above and go beyond itself, it needs divine grace. The utmost nature can do is to desist from sin, and long after grace. The will, however, must become conformed to God, and will all that it does will, purely for his glory. Now, this does not pertain to the will by nature, and it is here that the necessity of an influence by God upon man commences.[1] Only when both things are conjoined, can man reach his destined end, and transform his soul into a kingdom, in which the will, free by nature, but more free by grace, reigns as monarch, having love for its diadem, its own moral strength and that of the Holy Spirit for its robe, knowledge and discernment for counsellors, justice with prudence for judge, and for subjects all the powers of the soul.[2]

The operation of God upon man is effected by the Son and the Holy Ghost. Upon the one hand, the Son,[3] in respect of his divinity, is the perfect image, the pure mirror of the Father. This mirror, being ever before the face of God, is for that reason, and along with the image which it reflects, itself eternal. In this eternal image, or the Son, God knew us in himself, before we were created. This image, however, being stamped upon the noblest part of the soul, is essentially and personally in every man. All possess it entire, and none more of it than another. In that way all are united in the eternal prototype, the image of God, and there, without we creatures becoming God, or the image of God becoming a creature, our created substance and our created life repose as in an eternal cause; for the Son is the creative ground, and the life of all created things. On the other hand,[4] the Son, begotten in eternity, was likewise born and

to rise above the heights of heaven. All good works without humility lose their beauty. Freedom and humility are of equal value." s. 199.

[1] s. 223, *i.e.*, "Not by ours but by his own merits has God made us free. In order that we may feel this freedom, his Spirit must kindle love in ours. Our spirit is thus baptized, gifted with freedom, and united with his."

[2] Ibid. s. 183. Compare s. 350. "Whoever would attain to supernatural vision requires three things,—first, the grace of God, secondly, a free will wholly bent towards its object, and thirdly, a pure conscience unsullied by any mortal sins."

[3] Ibid. s. 189.

[4] Engelhardt, s. 177—179.

became man in time. As man, united incomprehensibly with the Deity, he exhibited a pattern of all virtues, especially those that are the most exhalted, humility, love, and patience. His soul was full of the Holy Spirit and of all gifts; and his love was a calm and blissful devotedness to God and the salvation of man. He has thereby become a fountain from which all that is needful to us flows. This was the object for which his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven took place, and the Holy Supper was instituted. Christ was and is common to all, the source of light to the whole world, especially to the Catholic Church, but likewise to every good and pious man.[1] What he did, he did for all. He is our Leader and Prince under the law of the Spirit, by whom the types have been perfected into eternal truth, the Father propitiated, and the spiritual tabernacle of the Church erected. In this, however, the Holy Spirit is his fellow-worker; with whom the Son, in respect of his divine nature, is one, and who, with all his gifts, dwelt in the Son in respect of his humanity, and is diffused from him upon all believers. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is always flowing out upon the creatures that are prepared for him. God is every where present. As the sun shines upon all trees; so He, the spiritual Sun, shines upon all the souls that have derived their origin from him. "God is willing to keep every man who is also willing." . . . "He is a common lustre and a common light, lighting every one according to his worth and want."[2]

The triune Godhead, however, is transfused in a threefold way into the human soul, which is its image. The deepest root and the proper essence of our soul, which is this eternal image of God, rests for ever in him. We all possess it as eternal life, without our own agency, and prior to our creation, in God. After our creation, however, three faculties take their rise in the substance of our soul, shapeless vacuity by which we receive the Father, the higher intellect by which we receive the Son, and the spark of the soul by which we receive the Holy Ghost, and become one spirit and one love with God. These three

[1] Ibid. s. 264.

[2] From the work, De ornatu spiritual. nuptiar. in Engelhardt, s. 351.

faculties, being the one and indivisible substance of the soul, and the living basis of its noblest powers, exist in all men; but in sinners are enveloped with sin as with a veil. That blessedness, however, which is God, cannot be acquired by art and ingenuity. We need the divine gifts and graces, in order to be raised above nature and renewed. By their means the memory attains to the formless vacuity, the intellect to simple truth, the will to divine liberty.[1]

These are the principles upon which Ruysbroek erects his system of Mysticism. The system itself, however, especially in as far as it affects life, is as follows.

Man, having proceeded from God, is destined to return, and become one with him again. This oneness, however, is not to be understood as meaning that we become wholly identified with him, and lose our own being as creatures, for that is an impossibility. What it is to be understood as meaning is, that we are conscious of being wholly in God, and at the same time also wholly in ourselves; that we are united with God, and yet, at the same time remain different from Him. Man ought to be conformed to God and to bear his likeness. But this he can do only in so far as it is practicable, and it is practicable only in as far as he does not cease to be himself and a creature. For God remains always God, and never becomes a creature; the creature always a creature, and never loses its own being as such.[2] Man, when giving himself up with perfect love to God, is in union with him, but he no sooner again acts, than he feels his distinctness from God, and that he is another being. Thus he flows into God, and flows back again into himself. The former state of oneness with, and the latter state of difference from, Him, are both enjoined by God, and betwixt the two subsists that continual annihilation in love which constitutes our felicity.[3]

There are *three ways* which conduct to *unity* with God, of which the one still leads farther and nearer to the mark than the

[1] Engelhardt, s. 189, 190.

[2] This is expressed by Ruysbroek in different passages and under various forms. The fundamental thought, however, of the specific difference, not to be done away, between the divine and the created being, remains always the same. Ibid. 217, 239, 243, 255, 259, 373.

[3] Ibid. s. 259.

other. These are the active, the inward, and the contemplative life.

The *active* life[1] consists in serving God outwardly, in abstinence, penitence, good morals, and holy actions, in the same way in which He, as God and man, served us, both by living and dying, even on the cross, and in our taking up the cross, as he did, and denying ourselves. By doing this, and accomplishing it with true earnestness, we comply not only with the divine commands, but also with the dictates of our reason, with the faith and precepts of Christianity, and with the manners and customs which good Christians generally observe. These exercises of virtue reason itself can apprehend.[2] They come far short of the highest perfection. At the same time, like the *justitia civilis*, they are the first step towards the *justitia spiritualis*, preliminary conditions to everything higher. For "without an outwardly virtuous life, we cannot draw near to God."[3]

We ought also, however, while diverting our minds from outward things, to penetrate into that which is *inward*. By practising the moral virtues, we turn outwardly towards man. By feeling love we turn inwards to God, acquire oneness of heart with him, spiritual freedom, conquest over the distractions of sense, and the guidance of the desires and senses to unity.[4] The contemplation and possession of this unity soars beyond the limits of the temporal. The good we do no longer contents us, the attainments we make do not satisfy. A boundless longing and devotion are kindled within us, in which all good works consume away. We become passionless. We care not to please any, and nothing which withdraws us from God is pleasing to us. We are alone with him, God and we, and nothing else.[5] In this state, divine grace, a deiform light assimilating to God,[6] streams forth upon us, and included in this grace, love, which is the basis for the human spirit and a root of all virtues. God condescends to us in grace, and we exalt ourselves to him in love and devotion. And thus arises a reciprocal play of powers, in which man is "annihilated in the incomprehensible embrace of oneness with God," and still comes to life again, or, in which, as

[1] Engelhardt, s. 190 sq. [2] Ibid. s. 201. [3] Ibid. s. 215.
[4] Ibid. s. 195 sq. [5] Ibid. s. 201. [6] Ibid. s. 210.

Ruysbroek elsewhere expresses it,[1] "the exercise of love between God and us is as the passing and repassing of flashes of lightning." "This oneness, with a perpetual hunger and intense desire, consumes the object of its love, and constantly gives birth to a new fervour, in which the spirit offers her highest sacrifice."[2] "Man lives in dying, and dies by living. Hunger and thirst are renewed from hour to hour, and constantly assuaged."[3] "And thus it is that at every present moment God is begotten within us, and that from this exalted generation, the Holy Spirit, with all his gifts, flows in upon us."[4]

The *contemplative* life, which Ruysbroek has taken particular pains to depict,[5] it being here of prime necessity to distinguish the ecclesiastical doctrine from the heretical views, especially of the Pantheistic mystics, consists in entering freely into communion with God, with a mind inclined towards him,—in going out of ourselves and becoming one spirit with God. In this state God unites us with himself in perpetual love, which love he is. He abides in us and we in him. This life is attained unto by those who discard all figures, and in the spirit alone freely love and serve. Its peculiarity, and difference from the preceding, lies in its being without idea or measure, and in its ever satisfying, simple, but blessed repose. True contemplation is a measureless knowledge, in which all action of the reason ceases, which, althougli not without reason, never descends to the reason, and to which the reason never mounts. It contemplates without admiration, for it has even admiration under it, and the object of its contemplation is not this or that object, but something which transcends all—(the absolute).[6] Whoever desires to lead the contemplative life must be adorned

[1] Engelhardt, s. 219.

[2] Engelhardt, s. 189. These thoughts are poetical. They are of constant recurrence among the Oriental mystics, and have been expressed by Goethe in the poem "Selige Sehnsucht" (in the Divan), which concludes with the words:

> And till that nameless good you've found
> Darkly by "Die to live" expressed,
> The dreary world you'll wander round,
> And seek, but seek in vain, for rest.

[3] Ibid. s. 214. [4] Ibid. s. 212. [5] Ibid. s. 224. sq.

[6] Ibid. s. 234.

with all virtues, and withdraw himself, above and away from the life of sense, into the highest part of the life within. There, unattainable by sense, nature, and reason, an intellectual light appears, imparting liberty and confidence in God, and becoming an enlightening medium between Him and us. Our mind, when without an image, is the mirror in which this light shines. In that mirror God lives within us by His grace, and we in God by our virtues. The light beams forth into similitude, and attracts us inwardly into unity. We feel this in a way transcending nature, in our blank and introverted intelligence. When man thus withdraws into himself and opens his heart, God flashes into it like lightning. A prodigious joy, a chaste delight, fills him. He exults, and is out of himself. He knows not how it is with him, or how he can endure what he feels.[1] But this inward exultation is still a lower degree of contemplation. Into those who have been elevated by it to the singleness and purity of their mind, God now sheds a simple light which is not Himself, but which is something intermediate between Him and the contemplative mind, and in which He is manifested not according to the distinction of persons, but in the simplicity of His nature and substance. This is the second stage of contemplation.[2] The third is *speculation:* vision and intuition in a mirror. The understanding of man becomes a living mirror into which the Father and the Son pour the spirit of truth, so that the enlightened reason comprehends all truth that can be comprehended, in images, forms, species, and similitudes. The single eye, like an angel, always beholds the face of the Father. Its object is the image which is God himself. It sees God and all things, inasmuch as it is one with God, and finds therein its full contentment. This highest stage of contemplation also coincides with the most perfect love.[3] But both, perfect apprehension, and perfect love which is identical with it, are no more action but pure rest. It is above all action, free and exempt from all exercise, passive to that divine love which changes the spirit of man, consumed and in a manner annihilated into itself, so that he forgets himself, and no longer knows either God or him-

[1] Ibid.s. 235.
[2] Ibid. s. 236.
[3] Ibid. s. 236. sq. and 246 sq.

self or any creature, or any thing but the mere love which he tastes, feels, experiences, and possesses, in simple repose.[1]

The above may suffice to show what the opinions of this mystic were. It will strike every judicious reader that he participates in the radical defect of all contemplative mysticism,[2] viz., a transcendental, and often phantastic plunging into the deepest abysses of knowledge, where the vestiges of all actual and rational intelligence disappear—an overstrained spiritual and moral effort to rise to a kind of angelical superiority to the senses, while, in the meantime, sinking into complete subjection to them,—an unwearied gazing into the sun-light of deity, until the earthly eye loses the power of vision,[3] and an indefinitude ensues which "sees something without knowing what it is."[4] If the pantheistical mysticism requires of man that he shall become, not a Christian, but a Christ, this theistical contemplative mysticism, dissatisfied with the condition of faith, insists at least that he shall even here on earth enter into the full vision. Besides, the mysticism of Ruysbroek, affecting, and with perfect sincerity, to be not only of a Christian, but even of an ecclesiastical character, laboured under

[1] In order to describe the contemplative life with Ruysbroek's own words, I shall quote a few passages from the third book of the Treatise, De ornatu spirit. nupt. At pages 291 and 292 Engelhardt says: "For this reason men of inward vision ought, in the way of contemplation, to soar beyond language and distinction, and above their created natures, with a fixed and perpetual gaze, and with the uncreated light. In this manner they will be transformed and made one with the light which is the object and the medium of their vision . . . For in this contemplation a man remains free and self-possessed, in a spirituality which is above all virtue, and all desert, for this is the crown and the reward which is now ours, and which in that way we possess, for contemplative life is celestial life." And further on at p. 296. "This—the eternal repose—is the existence which has no mode, and which all deep spirits have chosen above all things. It is the dark silence, in which all loving hearts are lost."

[2] De Wette agrees in this opinion, Sittenlehre ii. 2. s. 247. "Far more than Tauler, did Ruysbroek fall into the error of mystical sensuousness, and he confirms the observation, that all (?) mysticism tends to a more refined species of lust, to a feasting upon feelings."

[3] "When God reveals himself," says Ruysbroek, "reason becomes blind." Engelhardt, s. 221.

[4] Ibid. s. 234.

this particular want, that in its circle of ideas, it had no distinct and necessary place for the general fact of sin, and the sense of it, and hence none, likewise, for the idea of salvation and atonement, but referred all spiritual things, from their first rudiments to the perfection of divine life, directly to the influence of grace, and to the free will opening to admit it.[1] For, although Ruysbroek was far from denying or palliating sin, like the pantheist, and rather judged its particular manifestations in a spirit of moral rigour, still he did not duly weigh its importance in general. His eye revelling in contemplation, and resting upon God and the heavenly prototypes, soared far above the earthly shadows, which force themselves so strongly upon the view of every man of action, and even when he is a practical one, upon that of the mystic. Overlooking these defects, however, we must concede to the mysticism of Ruysbroek, subjectively, a deep earnestness, an exuberance of life, often rising to delightful poetry, and the truthfulness of an inwardly experienced man; and objectively, a decidedly higher position than that occupied by the pantheistic and heretical mysticism of the day.

In this latter respect, indeed, it might be doubted if Ruysbroek, by the doctrine of a complete absorption of the individual into the divine substance, did not himself fall back upon the principles of the free-thinking mystics. Nor shall we conceal that passages may be found in his writings which appear to justify this supposition. In the first place, according to his persuasion, rational and personal beings, as respects the deepest basis of their existence, as reflected images of God, are eternally in God. "God saw and recognised them in Himself, as somehow, but yet not wholly, different from Himself, for what is in God, is God."[2] But even in the sphere of created being, spirits, in respect of their eternal essence

[1] Ruysbroek conceived the matter to himself as follows: Man requires only to will, and by so doing becomes good and godly. His holiness is always proportional to the excellence of his will. If he wills love, he has it; if he wills God, he has God. For just as, in order to take breath, we have but to breathe, so does it rest with man himself to open his heart, in order to receive into it the Omnipresent divinity. In the view he took of it, however, this was by no means accomplished in a moment, but was an enduring process in which freedom and grace co-operate.

[2] InEngelhardt, s. 241. De ornatu spirit. nupt. Lib. iii. s. 288.

and life, continue for ever in God, and undistinguishable from him,[1] for they resemble God, and although to reason there be here distinction the same diversity, still resemblance to God is the same with that image of the Most High, which is God's eternal wisdom, and in which He contemplates Himself, and all else in everlasting presence. Uncreated being is suspended upon the eternal Being, and in respect of its essential nature is one with him. "For it possesses an eternal indwelling in the divine Being, and here there is neither distinction, difference, nor description."[2] Yea, even the return of the created being to God, and its union with Him, are repeatedly described by Ruysbroek as a melting away, and fusion into God, and the expressions which he here employs are often of a sort which makes it difficult to distinguish between moral and substantial oneness. "The spirit becomes the very truth which it apprehends; God is apprehended by God. We become one with the same light with which we see, and which is both the medium and the object of our vision."[3]

It was upon statements of this sort, that the celebrated Gerson, himself a mystic, though one of a more learned and moderate stamp, with stronger ties to the Church, and more acquaintance with the scholastic method, founded the accusation which he raised against Ruysbroek, of being implicated in the heretical tendency of mysticism.[4] Several decennia after its author's death, Gerson had met with the work "On the adornment of the spiritual marriage," translated into Latin, and had found especially in the first and second book, much that was profitable and profound, but at the sametime had taken serious offence at several passages in the third. Ruysbroek, he alleged, teaches that the soul, in the fulness of contemplation, not only beholds God through the brightness of His divine being, but is itself, that brightness, inasmuch as it ceases to retain the form of existence, which, as being of its own kind, formerly belonged to it,

[1] Ibid. s. 241.

[2] From the third Book of the Work, de ornatu spirit. nupt. s. 289. in Engelhardt.

[3] Ibid. s.286 and 292.

[4] Jo. Gersoni Epist. ad Fr. Bartholom. Carth. super tertia parte libri Joh. Ruysbroek de ornatu spirit. nupt. Opp. ed. du Pin, i. 59. See also a detailed view of the case in Engelhardt, s. 265 sq., a more succinct one in Gieseler ii. 3. s. 228.

and becomes wholly changed, or transformed, or swallowed up into the Divine being. The passages adduced by Gerson[1] are certainly sufficient to make it appear that Ruysbroek was addicted even to pantheistic mysticism. But after an unprejudiced examination of the arguments for and against this appearance is again done away. For, in the first place, Ruysbroek in his general theology was no pantheist. He distinctly recognises not only the immanence of God, but, what no pantheist can do, his transcendence. According to Ruysbroek, God is immanent in the world, inasmuch as through the medium of the Divine persons he perpetually operates upon it, and in a manner overflows into it, and inasmuch as he dwells even originally in all created spirits, and, in particular, unites himself in the closest manner with the pious. He is also, however, transcendent, inasmuch as he likewise eternally rests in his own essence, and independently of the world, or as Ruysbroek expresses it, "far above all creatures," possesses and enjoys himself in his Godhead and its persons. And in the second place, he too frequently and too solicitously avers that in the oneness of the contemplative man with God, he still recognises a difference between the two, to permit us to ascribe to him the doctrine of an absolute solution of the individual into the Divine substance. He says, not once and casually, but often and emphatically, that God never can become a creature, nor the creature God, and that between the two there must ever be a difference. In general he is resolved to stand firm upon the foundation of the Church's creed,[2] and decidedly opposes the pantheistic mysticism. The equivocal passages in question therefore must be estimated in the light of explanations so distinct as these, and in that case, the utmost with which he can be charged is a wavering between the two systems, though with

[1] These, for the most part, are the same we have cited. For instance, In the act of self-depletion, the spirit loses itself in the enjoyment of love, and imbibes directly the brightness of God, yea becomes the very brightness which it imbibes. All who are raised to the sublimity of this contemplative life are one with the deifying (deifica) brightness, and become one and the same light as that which they behold. To such a height is the spirit elevated above itself and made one with God, in respect that in the oneness of that living original in which, according to its uncreated being, it possesses itself, it enjoys and contemplates boundless treasures in the same manner as God Himself.

[2] See the passage in Engelhardt, p. 343.

an unmistakeable predilection for the theistical, or as we prefer saying, a want of precision and clearness of expression, into which any person seeking to embody his highest ecstacies[1] might easily fall. To this sole point of incautious expression, the substance of Gerson's[2] charge was limited, subsequently to a defence of Ruysbroek by one of his admirers, the learned Canon of Grünthal, *John of Schoenhofen*,[3] and considering the stress Gerson laid upon strictness and general significancy of language, he cannot be blamed for having done so.

Accordingly, we may affirm that Ruysbroek's doctrine coincided with that of the heretical mystics in the following points: First, like them, he made the tenet, that man must become one with God and be assimilated to him, or, so to speak, deiform, the centre of his whole theory of Christianity. Secondly, the only way to this oneness with God, in its highest degree, was, according to both, to be found in contemplation, complete retirement, and an absolutely free and unrestrained spirituality, which renounces all distinction, volition, and action. On the other hand, the mysticism of the heretics being patheistical, and Ruysbroek's theistical, they differ in several particulars. First of all, the former hold man to be by nature divine, whereas the latter considers his conformity to God to be effected by the ingrafting of a fresh shoot into the wild tree,[4] or by a process of grace; and accordingly they hold oneness with God to be an absolute existence of God in man, whereas, according to the latter, it is a perpetual uniting with Him, an evolution of life, a receiving of God, succeeded by a hungering after him, a constantly reiterated dying and living unto God. Again, while the former decidedly pass into antinomianism, the latter, although elevating himself

[1] For this reason Ruysbroek was called *Doctor ecstaticus*.

[2] See Gersoni Opp. T. I. p. 78 sq.

[3] See Ibid. Opp. T. i. p. 63, and for an account of John von Schoenhofen (Schoonhoven, *Schoonhovia)*, Trithemius de Script. Eccl. c. 790. p. 184, where he is highly extolled, and mention made of his Defensorium Jo. Rusbrog. Also Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 560, and Foppens ii. 725. John von Schoenhofen died at Grünthal in 1431.

[4] He states this particularly in the work De ornatu Spirit. Nupt. See the passages in Engelhardt, s. 351 and 352, and likewise 344. On this subject there is a verse to be found in a Munich manuscript of Ruysbroek's treatise (Engelhardt s. 346), written upon the

above the law and all legal obedience, still recognises the law as an indispensable preliminary condition, without which it is impossible to reach the interior and contemplative life, and from whose obligation even the higher stages of life do not discharge. The piety of the one was thus fanatical and outwardly uncontrolled; whereas that of the other was regulated and only free within the restraints of the divine commandments.

The moral spirit with which the mysticism of Ruysbroek was imbued, generated in his character, along with the taste for contemplation, a love also of the practical, and even of the *reformatory*. The eye of the quiet mystic was not so blinded by perpetual gazing upon the divine light, as not to have retained sufficient power of vision for the objects of his immediate vicinity, and even the relations of general life. On the contrary, his sight was here very acute, and he did not want fortitude to declare what he saw, nor energy, where it appeared to him necessary, actively to interfere. His practical turn of mind he exercised, especially in the arrangements of his monastery, and shewed his boldness as a reformer in the views he took of the condition of the Church and of public life in general. This latter subject we must here present more distinctly to view.[1]

However strong might be Ruysbroek's determination to be a true member of the Church, and to live and die[2] as a servant of Christ in the Catholic faith, still, in general, he took an attitude, which to a certain extent was one of opposition to the dominant Church, maintaining the *principle of Internalism*, in opposition to

margin, which undoubtedly accords with the sentiments of Ruysbroek:

> Wouldst thou, O man, engrafted be
> Into the good and holy tree,
> In heaven to live and grow;
>
> Lop off each wild and bitter shoot
> Of nature's growth, that holy fruit
> God's image fair may shew.

[1] See a more detailed account in Engelhardt, s. 326—337.
[2] Ibid. s. 343.

that of Secularisation, and exalting the spirit of faith, charity, and contemplation, as the more excellent, when compared with the performance of works. Neither did he embrace the doctrine of the Church in its fixed traditionary rigour; but quickened it with mysticism, and even changed it on many points. By the inner and contemplative life in its various gradations, man grows in all the virtues; and it is not credible that if he perseveres he will ever degenerate. "If it happen, however, that a man occupies himself in, and addicts himself to, the several kinds of works, more than to their substance and motives, and that he continues exercising himself with sacraments, and signs, and performances of an outward sort, more than with the objects and the truth which are thereby signified and conveyed, it is very possible that he may to a certain extent undergo a change, become once more an *outward* man, and, with all his good works, still be in captivity to silliness and prejudice. But if so be that a man desires to draw near to God, to elevate himself, and render his life fruitful, he must penetrate from the work to the reason of it, and from the sign to the truth. He thereby becomes master of his works, a professor of the truth, and enters into the *inner life*."[1] Ruysbroek, however, did not keep himself within the limits of this internal life. He also took a clear and comprehensive view of the whole rich domain of real and external things. Being a much consulted confessor and director of conscience, and having exercised the office of secular priest until sixty years of age, he had enjoyed abundant opportunities of observing men of all descriptions, and how distinctly he perceived the improvements required by the Church and society in his day, may be learned from the following review of his opinions.

Among the *laity* he rebukes all classes, high and low, male and female. In the lower ranks, he censures the prevailing luxury and licentiousness in dancing, gaming, and feasting,[2] vain and senseless expenditure on clothes, and restless avidity for riches.

[1] From a version of the 1st and 2d books, De ornatu spirit. nupt. in the Münich Cod. Germ. 818, in Engelhardt, s. 367 and 368.

[2] By night, when decent men are fast asleep, they have parties for dancing, gaming, gluttony, and drunkenness. Some go to mass only to shew men their beauty. These are the world for whom Jesus refused to pray.

The great he blames, because far from going before the people with a good example, they took the lead of them in all that was evil. Every man in his station ought to do his part, and honestly earn his bread. But now, he says, avarice and falsehood, deceit and cunning, false weights, measures, and money, abound on every side. Popes, princes, and prelates themselves bow the knee to wealth, and, in place of the improvement and correction of souls, have only their purse in their eye. A main cause of this corruption, as seems to Ruysbroek, lies in the Church's being itself accessible to wealth, and offering its gifts for money. All spiritual things are at the command of the rich. For them chaunts are sung, mass read, every external service the Church can render, performed. They obtain without difficulty indulgences for the pains of Purgatory, and all manner of sins, and, when they die, requiems are sung on every side, and the bells tolled. They are buried before the altar, and numbered with the blessed. But if they have died in unrighteousness, not all mankind together are able to rescue them from the torments of hell, and though they may have bestowed their whole property upon the poor, it will profit them nothing.

Ruysbroek speaks even more sharply against the corruptions of the *Clerical profession* in its various gradations, and here he begins with the decline of Monachism. Neither the ecclesiastical office, nor monachism, nor the priesthood, nor ordination, can of itself sanctify or save. For this purpose, that which is above all other things necessary, is a life corresponding to the Spirit and pattern of Jesus Christ. To the whole of Christendom Christ has bequeathed certain commandments which are obligatory upon all, and along with them, particular counsels conducting to a higher state of perfection, which we are left to our free will to embrace or not. These counsels relate chiefly to poverty, and chastity of soul and body, such as Christ himself exemplified, and the monks come under an obligation to observe them. Far from complying with the counsels, however, they do not even keep the commandments. Among them, as well as among the clergy,—Ruysbroek excepts only the Carthusians and the *inclusæ virgines sacræ*—three vices generally prevail: sloth, gluttony, and debauchery. At the first institution of monastic life, this was not the case. The early

fathers were poor; the founders of the mendicant orders being content with God for a portion, and despising all temporal possessions and honours. Now-a-days almost all monasteries strive after riches. In every order, and in many convents, the inmates are rich and poor, just as in the world. Innumerable are mendicant monks, but few are to be found who observe the statutes of their order. They pass themselves off as poor, and yet suck up all that the land produces for miles around their convent, and live in affluence. Nay, there are even distinctions of rank among them, which ought on no account to be the case. Some of them possess four, some five coats, while others have scarcely one. Some of them guzzle in the refectory at a separate table, with the Prior, the guardian, and reader, while the rest must be satisfied with vegetables, herring, and beer; and this makes them envious, and all the more that they believe there should be among them a community of goods. The primitive founders of the order were men of the utmost simplicity, and chose for their raiment the coarsest uncoloured cloth. But now black has been changed into brown, the grey is mixed with blue, or green, or red, the white must be of the finest wool, and even respecting the shape of the garments, the most anxious deliberations are held. Monks ride about in armour, with swords at their side. Nuns wear girdles, with silver plates and bells, have costly bedsteads, cushions, chairs, and embroidered pillows and bolsters. But worst of all is the love of the world and voluptuousness. Abbots and monks turn their backs upon God and solitude. They appear at the nightly prayers only when compelled, but spend their time in visiting, on horseback or on foot, their relations and friends, and in hunting after meat and drink and all sorts of diversions, at which there is no lack both of sin and infamy. Nuns sally forth from their convents as gaily dressed as if it was their business to serve the world and the Devil, and seduce many against their will. The convent is a prison to them, and the world a paradise. Is all this according to Benedict's or Augustine's rule? It would need many a gloss and commentary to make that appear.

The *Priests* are no better. It is true that even now-a-days there are right men among them possessed of the spirit and

wisdom of Christ. But the good are to the bad as one to a hundred. The great majority are blind, and have deviated far from the path of truth. They rule the people, not as shepherds but as tyrants; are irritable, envious, miserly, and grasping. Having generally purchased their benefices, they in their turn expose to sale all spiritual privileges; and if it were in their power, would sell Christ and grace, and eternal life, to sinners for money. If there be any fee in prospect, they hurry to the Church at the first stroke of the bell, but when that is not the case, the bells may all be rung till they burst, before any of them will come, and the service is left to be performed by hirelings. Many, too, live with concubines, paying a tax for the indulgence proportioned to their means; they keep their children at home, and amuse themselves with them. The most endeavour to multiply their benefices, of which even four or five are not enough to satisfy their desire. The more of them also they possess, the less they care for their duties, and the more they indulge their avarice and greed. A plurality of benefices cannot be sanctioned by the Pope himself, but are rather lent by wicked spirits to rich priests and prebendaries, to take them captive and keep them as slaves for ever. The poor ministers who do the work are paid with a trifle, while the pluralists amass hoards, carry on traffic, gamble, purchase costly dress, and store up meat and drink in profusion. Many of them become agents to laymen; others walk as menials in the train of ladies of quality when going to church. The spirituality of their office is wholly lost sight of.

Nor are the higher *Prelates* without their peculiar faults. It is certain, indeed, that there are pious and benevolent men also among the Bishops. But even these are sometimes not accessible without bribing their vicars, officials, and domestics. The majority, however, trouble themselves little with the proper service of the Church. They read the mass only on high festivals. Even though of humble rank, the moment they become rich their pride swells. Many are learned, and endowed with worldly wisdom, but in the pursuit of wealth and ambition their spirit is blinded, and they cease to have any sense of virtue. In their visitations, they are accompanied with an escort of above

forty horsemen and an immense train of servants; of which the expense is borne by others and not by them. Great feasts and pomps are appointed, and endless provisions of meat and drink required. Nothing at all is done to better the lives of the clergy and their subordinates. Only notorious crimes are inquired into. For these the offenders are subjected to a pecuniary fine, which is proportioned to their wealth, and when that is paid, they are at liberty to serve the Devil for another year. In this way all obtain, each what he wants; the Devil the soul, the Bishop the money, and the unhappy and infatuated men a momentary gratification.

From this charge of corruption Ruysbroek does not exempt the very highest dignitaries, the *Popes*. The Pope, he says, styles himself the servant of the servants of God, and must consider himself in this light, as regards the spiritual service and advantage of the Church, if he wishes to be the successor of Christ and to reign with him. In the infancy of Christianity, Popes, Bishops, and Priests were upon a level; they converted the nations, established the Church, and sealed the faith with their blood. But in the present day it is no more so. They who occupy the inheritance of Christ and the emoluments of the Church, are of an unstable spirit, unquiet, dissolute, wholly set upon worldly things, and ignorant of the obligations of their office. The Popes, like the Bishops and Prelates, bow the knee to earthly riches. Certain it is, that if in its infancy the Church's spiritual officers had been as little spiritual as they now are, the Church would never have spread to its present extent.

The foregoing picture shews, that in Ruysbroek's character there was a double element, a taste for contemplative mysticism, and a taste for practical reforms. The two were fused into union, but, owing to his natural temperament, in such a way that the taste for contemplation predominated. These tendencies, combined in Ruysbroek, as in a single root, we shall immediately see disjoined from each other. They present themselves separately in two persons, upon whom he exercised a great influence, in John *Tauler* and Gerhard *Groot*. The for-

mer developed his contemplative spirit, and propagated the taste for *mysticism* upon the soil of *Germany*, which was more prepared to receive it. The latter embraced the spirit of *practical reform*, and found for his exertions which told directly upon life, a predisposing susceptibility among the more practical inhabitants of the *Netherlands*. Both tendencies, in their progress, frequently intertwined with each other, and were of great consequence for the Reformation. We turn, in the first instance, to the shape which things assumed in the Netherlands, and shall afterwards revert to the ramifications of the mystical tendency in Germany, and its influence upon the Reformation.

PART SECOND.

THE INSTITUTION AND FIRST DEVELOPMENT OF THE BROTHERHOODS OF THE COMMON LOT.

CHAPTER FIRST.

GERHARD GROOT. THE FIRST INSTITUTION OF THE SOCIETIES.

We have reached the point at which, by means of the Brethren of the Common Lot, a fresh and peculiar combination of the practical tendency of the more ancient fellowships with the traditionary doctrines of mysticism took place, to some extent directly involving a new condition of things, and in a much higher degree preparing for such a result.

The Societies of the Beguines, Beghards, and Lollards, which from the first laboured under various defects and imperfections, had in the course of time degenerated, and by their own fault, either fallen to pieces of themselves, or been suppressed The two things, however, still existed, viz., the propensity to religious association, which is universally powerful, but which, especially in the middle ages, produced most important results, and could not but gain strength in proportion as the great frame-work of the Church became more and more loose; and likewise, the outward conditions, which required and rendered practicable the efforts of

benevolence and charity, strengthened by co-operation. The last was particularly the case in the *Netherlands*, and most in the northern provinces. The country was distracted by factions, ruined by protracted feuds, and desolated by repeated visitations of pestilence.[1] But wherever general misery makes its appearance, there also, like the bow of peace in the dark and stormy sky, does Christian love arise with her helping and healing power. Nor did she want the means for administering relief. For here, as elsewhere, amidst the tumult of parties and feuds, the cities, strengthened by mutual covenants, grew to a state of most flourishing prosperity, promoting within their walls every useful trade and every commendable exertion of the mental faculties. We have chiefly to mention the three towns of Oberyssel, *Deventer*, *Kampen*, and *Zwoll*;[2] the very places where, supported by the wealth and benevolence of the inhabitants, the institutions of which we are to speak were founded and multiplied.

While these older associations, by their practical tendency, relieved the outward afflictions of life, the vital mysticism, pertaining to them and other parties, was calculated to satisfy the religious cravings of the heart. This mysticism had also degenerated. It had become Pantheistic, fanatical, and sectarian. But the craving of the heart still existed; for scholasticism, far from imbibing new life, had only increased in pedantic dryness and subtilty. No doubt mysticism had, mainly by the labours of Ruysbroek, recovered itself from the lowest depths; But it nevertheless still continued too flighty, fantastic, and sensuous, and, if it was ever to exert any general efficacy upon the people, required to become more simple, practical, and pure.

In fine, both tendencies, in their earlier form, were destitute of a third element, necessary if their operation was to be truly salutary and transforming, viz., decided zeal for the sound intellectual education of the people, especially of the young, or in other words, an interest in science. For this the age called with the utmost urgency. In opposition to the prevailing scholastic wis-

[1] Compare Delprat's Brüderschaft des gemeinsamen Lebens. German translation, p. 5.

[2] Ibid. p. 6. Brumanus de rebus Transislanis in Dumbar Analect. ii. 136.

dom, a revival, and at the same time a simplification of science, a return to the primitive, the fresh, and the genuine, were of indispensable necessity. Such a revival could not possibly proceed from scholasticism, itself now effete; but must necessarily come from quite different and newly opened fountains.

Here, then, the *Institute of the Common Lot* takes its rise. Satisfying the propensity to association in a better and purer way, and imparting to mysticism a more popular and practical form, which it drew from the stores of Scripture now again brought into notice, while, at the same time, it associated with these, at the first, indeed, in small beginnings, a love of science, and a lively zeal for the instruction of youth and the common people, this institute corresponded so exactly with the exigencies of the age, as both effectually to advance and successfully prepare it for still loftier attainments.

The first author of this new series of evolutions was *Gerhard Groot*[1] (Geert Groete or de Groot, *Gerhardus Magnus*),[2] a man

[1] He gives himself the name: Ego, Gerardus dictus tuethonice Groot. Thomae à Kemp. Vita Gerh. xviii. 7.

[2] The following works may be consulted respecting Gerhard Groot and his institutions: Thomas à Kempis Vita venerab. magistri Gerardi Magni, in Opp. Thomae à K. ed. Colon. T. iii. p. 3—42, edit. 1728, towards the end, p. 1—33. edit. Paris. p. 159—169. Of this biography no less than of that of Florentius and the other more distinguished Brethren of the Common Lot, which we owe to Thomas à Kempis, abundant use will be made in the following account. Ant. Miraeus in Chronico ad ann. 1384. Rudolf Dier de Muden de Magistro Gherardo Grote in Analectis Belgicis ed. Dumbar. T. 1. Jodocus Badius Ascensius de Gerardo Magno coinstitutore Clericorum Regularium s. Fratrum D. Hieronymi in fronte Ed. Opp. Thomae a Kempis ab ipso edit. Tit. viii. Joh. Busch Chronicon Windesemense ed. Rosweide. Antw. 1621. Lib. i. Cap. 1. Jac. Revii Daventriae illustratae Libri vi. Lugd. Bat. 1651. p. 28 seqq. Valer. Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 277. Foppens Biblioth. Belgica T. i. p. 354. Lindeborn Historia Episcopatus Daventr. Colon. 1670. Trithemius de Script. Eccles. cap. 656. ed. Fabr. p. 154. Sweertius Athenae Belg. p. 280. Fabricii Biblioth. med. et. inf. Latin. T. iii. p. 117. Paquot Mémoires pour servir a l'hist. lit. de xvii. Prov. T. iv. p. 345. Saxii Onomast. T. ii. p. 381. Dumbar Kerkelijk en Wereldlijk Deventer. Wassenberg de urbe Daventria eruditionis in Belg. matre et conserv. celeberrima. Of modern and more recent works we have to mention: Meiner's Biogr.

of glowing piety and great zeal in doing good, a powerful popular orator, and an affectionate friend of youth. He was not, indeed, extensively learned nor classically polished,[1] for his Latin was poor and not free from barbarisms: with Greek and Hebrew he was wholly unacquainted, and his reading was confined mainly to the Holy Scriptures, the Canonists and Church Fathers, especially to his favourites, Augustine and Bernard. But although not highly learned, Gerhard was yet sufficiently well-informed to occupy an honourable place among his contemporaries, even as a theologian, and what was of chief importance, he always directed his attention to the necessary, solid, and practical parts of knowledge, in which the education of the age, slowly endeavouring to break loose from Scholasticism, was mainly deficient. He might perhaps have been a greater scholar, have written Latin like a Poggius, and excelled Erasmus in philology and wit, and yet he would not have so thoroughly and efficiently ministered to the peculiar wants of his time, if his pious disposition and truly affectionate heart had not induced him to become

des Rud. Agricola in the Lebensbeschreib. berühmter Männer Th. 2. s. 311. Biographie universelle. Paris 1816. T. xvii. p. 173. Verburg ueber den alten Ruhm der Stadt Deventer, als Erziehungschule zur wahren Geistesbildung 1823. Delprat ueber das Leben und die Verdienste des G. Groote 1823. Schwartz Geschichte der Erziehung 2te Aufl. 1829. Th 2. s. 236. Gieseler K. Gesch. B. 2. Abth. 3. s. 208. The newest and most important treatises, however, are the following; respecting G. Groot himself, the article in the Church History Archiv von Kist und Royaard's, over den Geest en de Denk-wijze van Geert Groot, the first part of which was begun in 1829, s. 355—398 by Th. Adr. Clarisse, the son, and which was then continued in 1830, s. 247—395, by J. Clarisse, the father; And respecting the institutions of Gerhard, G. H. M. Delprat's prize essay Verhandeling over de Broederschap van G. Groote, en over den Invloed der Fraterhuizen etc. Utrecht 1830, translated into German by Mohnike, Leipz. 1840. Of these works I am thankful to have been enabled to make a very liberal use. Whoever would write a complete history of the Institute of the Common Lot, which I could not here design, would require to consult other unprinted authorities, preserved in various places in Holland, and among these the manuscript from the Library of the Brother-house in Deventer, now in the possession of Professor H. W. Tydemann, and of which an account is given in the article referred to in the Kirchenhist. Archivs Th. i. s. 394—98. See also Th. 2. s. 250. Anmerk. 9.

[1] Comp. the Kirchenhist. Archiv Th. i. s. 356, and Th. 2. s. 271 sq.

the founder of a new system of education for youth and the common people. It was by that that he became one of the chief benefactors of his contemporaries and of posterity.[1] And although, in the course of time, his work grew till it was greater than himself, although by an Agricola, an Alexander Hegius, John Wessel, and others, far more was accomplished than Gerhard ever consciously designed, still he has a great claim to the gratitude, especially of Germany and Holland, for having given the initiative impulse; and it is still a delightful task to relate the life and labours of so worthy a man, of his fellow-workers, and immediate successors.

Gerhard Groot was descended from a distinguished family in Overyssel. His father, Werner Groot, was Sheriff and Burgomaster of Deventer,[2] at that time a town of considerable importance. In the month of October of the year 1340, Gerhard, probably the only son of Werner and his wife Helwig, was born in a house upon the Brink at Deventer. Feeble in body,[3] but endowed with excellent powers of mind, he was destined for a career of study. After receiving at the school, as we cannot doubt, of his native city, the rudiments of education, he was impelled by a thirst of knowledge, and some touch of ambition,[4] to visit what was then reputed the first seminary of science in Europe, the University of Paris. There he remained for three years, from 1355 to 1358, receiving lessons in philosophy, as is highly probable, from the nominalist Buridanus, so universally famed for the dilemma of the ass between two bundles of hay, and at the Sorbonne[5] of ancient celebrity, studying theology, to which he specially devoted himself. Here, too, he seems to have enjoyed close intimacy and friendship with Henry Aeger,[6]

[1] Thomas à Kempis says of him: Nam totam hanc patriam nostram vita, verbo, moribus et doctrina illuminavit et accendit. Vita Gerhardi M. Cap. i., sect. 2.

[2] Patre Wernero Magno, Scabino et Consule Daventriensi, Matre Heylwige, utroque secundum seculi dignitatem honoribus ac divitiis sublimi et potente. Daventr. illustr. p. 28, 29. Compare Delprat p. 7 of the German translation.

[3] Tenero corpusculo, says Thomas Vita Gerh. vii. 1.

[4] Ibid. ii. 1, 2.

[5] Andreae Bibl. Belg. p. 277.

[6] Aeger died in 1408, 24 years after his younger friend. For an account of him compare Foppens Bibl. Belg. 1. 451. Fabric. Bibl. med. aev. iii. 665, Paquot memoires, iv. 88.

also called after the place of his birth, Henry of Kalkar, who afterwards distinguished himself by his works on rhetoric and music, and by a history of the Carthusian order of monks, to which he belonged. Henry of Kalkar, however, (being born 1328) was by twelve years Gerhard's senior, and is also mentioned as having been his confessor at Paris. After obtaining the degree of master in his eighteenth year,[1] Gerhard in compliance with the wish of his father, returned home, furnished with all the knowledge of theology and the canon law[2] which his age possessed, and likewise not averse to the science and practice of magic.[3] Actuated by scientific zeal, however, he shortly after repaired to Cologne, where he further prosecuted his studies, and made his first appearance as professor with applause.

As the scion of so distinguished a family, Gerhard had shortly after his return obtained several prebends, and was made Canon of Utrecht and of Aix.[4] Affluently furnished with the gifts of fortune, it appeared that he would tread the usual path of worldly-minded clergymen. He took part in public amusements, treated himself to the richest food and most costly wine, dressed his hair, wore gay clothes, a girdle with silver ornaments, and a cloak of the finest fur.[5] With prominent intellectual acquisitions, he was a man according to the prevailing spirit of the times. But soon deeper and more serious sentiments awoke within him. Even while at Cologne, a person, whose attention had been called to the powers slumbering in the breast of the youth, had one day said to him, when present as a spectator at some public game: "Why dost thou stand here intent on vanities? You must become another man?"[6] He was still more shaken, however, by the words of his old Parisian acquaintance, Henry Aeger, who had now become prior of the Carthusian monastery of Monchhuysen, near Arnheim. In an interview they had at Utrecht, Henry took the opportunity of admonishing

[1] Thom. à Kempis Vita Gerh. ii. 2.

[2] Tritheim says of him, Vir tam in divinis Scripturis, quam in *jure canonico* egregie doctus. De Script. eccl. c. 656. p. 154.

[3] Vita Gerh. xiii. 5. Daventr. illustr. p. 29: Dicitur et curiosis ac illicitis artibus juvenilem animum infeliciter applicuisse.

[4] Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 277. According to the testimony of Peter van Beeck in his Aquis-granum. Vit. Gerh. ii. 2.

[5] Thom. Vit. Gerh. cap. xi. Sect. 7.

[6] Thom. Vita Gerh. iii. 2.

him with deep earnestness, on the vanity of earthly things, and on death, eternity, and the chief good.[1] The old acquaintance struck the right cords in Gerhard's heart, who, overcome with emotion, promised that, with the help of God, he would change his course of life and renounce the world.

From that hour Groot was in a manner transformed. He renounced the use of the emoluments of his prebends, and of his paternal fortune, burnt on the Brink at Deventer his costly books of magic,[2] shunned all diversions, put on plain grey clothing, and calmly braved the derision which this conduct brought upon him.[3] In order to concentrate the powers of his mind, he retired into the Carthusian monastery at Monchhuysen in Gelders, and there spent three years in serious self-reflection, the study of Holy Scriptures, and the most rigorous penitential exercises.[4] Dressing himself in a long and coarse garment of hair-cloth, totally abstaining from the use of flesh and other lawful things, and passing a considerable portion of his nights in watching and prayer, he forced his feeble body into complete subservience to the spirit.[5] His object was first to learn for himself what he was afterwards to teach others.[6] In this way, as Thomas à Kempis says,[7] might Gerhard have lived on in solitude for the benefit of his own soul. But being less qualified for the ascetical life, and all the more mighty as a speaker, it was better that he should benefit the people by the ministry of the Word. His nature was adapted not for contemplation, but for action. While Ruysbroek, the longer he laboured in the world, languished the more for solitude, the practical Gerhard, after having devoted only three years to meditation, was, by an inward exigency, forced back into active life. He refused, however, to become a priest. So high was his idea of the priesthood, and of its immense responsibility, that he used to say, "I would not, for all the gold of Arabia, undertake the care of souls even

[1] Thom. Vita. Gerh. iv. 2.
[2] Delprat. p. 8. of German translation.
[3] Vit. Gerh. v. 1, 3.
[4] Vita Gerh. vi. 2. viii. 2. Tribus annis lectioni et orationi vacavit, antequam praedicare inciperet.
[5] Ibid. vii. 1, 2.
[6] Thomas à Kempis' own words. Ibid. vi. 1.
[7] Ibid. viii. 1.

for a single night."[1] Hence he would only consent to be ordained a deacon—an office which conferred on him the right of publicly instructing the people.

In this manner, at the call of the Carthusians,[2] who considered him as peculiarly qualified for the species of labour, Gerhard came forward, with great power and efficacy, as a Christian teacher of the people. After obtaining from Florentius von Wevelinchoven,[3] Bishop of Utrecht, a license to preach over the whole of his diocese, he was seen, as of old Peter de Bruys and Henry of Lausanne, as afterwards, St Norbert, and as in still more recent times, George Fox, William Penn, and others, in mean attire, travelling through towns and villages, and everywhere exhorting the people to repentance and amendment, with overpowering eloquence. As depicted by Thomas à Kempis, he laboured in the spirit of John the Baptist, laying the axe to the root of the tree,[4] and by preaching the law and repentance to his contemporaries, now more and more generally sinking into wickedness, he again prepared them for the reviving gospel.[5] His discourses, listened to by the great and the humble, by clergy and laity, went to the heart.[6] It was not merely the copiousness and easy flow of his eloquence that struck the hearers, but a very different thing. Here was a preacher who spoke, not because it it was his professional duty, nor for the sake of the pay,[7] but freely and gratuitously, and because impelled by the zeal of love, in whom it was impossible not to mark deep concern and intense seriousness, and who sealed by the actions of his life the

[1] Andreae Bibl. Belg. p. 277. with a reference to Massaei Chronic. Lib. xviii.

[2] Vit. Gerh. viii. 1.

[3] See respecting him Beschrÿving van de Bischoppelijke Munten en Zegelen van Utrecht door Frans van Mieris p. 222—226.

[4] Vita Gerh. viii. 2.

[5] Ibid. viii. 2; xv. 1, where it is specially noticed that Gerhard preached the law—the *Decalogue*, to that slumbering age, with the greatest earnestness.

[6] Multi audientes sermonem ejus *compuncti* sunt. Vit. Gerh. viii. 2.

[7] Nihil ab illis, quibus praedicat, recipiens, mullum temporale seu ecclesiasticum petit beneficium. Letter of Mag. Wilhelm of Salvarvilla at the end of Vita Gerh. xviii. 23.

sentiments taught him by his own experience.[1] Self-possessed, even when most impassioned, Gerhard endeavoured to turn to account on the instant the prevailing mood of the audience. He occasionally allowed his eyes to range over the bystanders in order to examine them; and then at once adapted his discourse to their condition and necessities.[2] Nor was it less subservient to his success, that he did not address the people in the foreign Latin tongue, but in the dialect of the country.[3] Hence at Deventer, Kampen, Zwoll, Utrecht, Leyden, Delft, Gouda, and Amsterdam,[4] where he first preached in low Dutch, the whole population, neglecting their meals and most urgent business, thronged in such multitudes to hear him, that the church not being able to contain them, he was compelled to bring his audience into the open air. Wherever he found admission he was indefatigable, frequently preaching twice a-day, and for three hours at a time.[5] But what was of most consequence, Gerhard's appearance as a preacher did not merely create wonder and transitory excitement, but actual conversion and permanent amendment. A contemporary relates[6] that many were induced by him to renounce a worldly life, and devote themselves to God, to restore stolen property, give up usury, and live in chastity and temperance.

Calmly as he could rely upon the effects evidently produced by his sermons, and decided as was also the approbation he earned from the better part of his contemporaries, (so much so, that on one occasion, to his great comfort, he received a highly

[1] In an epitaph upon Gerhard also at the end of that work it is said :

Fecit quod dixit, sicut docuit quoque vixit.

and to the same effect, Thomas à Kempis in the Vita Florent. vi. 1, says : Viva vox magistri praedicantis tanto fortius valuit in cordibus audientium, quanto perfectius caeteros præibat in via virtutum, ut fidem sermonibus ejus daret sancta conversatio in operatione ostensa.

[2] Thom. à Kemp. Vita Florent. vi. 2.

[3] The Chronicle of Windesem says : Belgico sermone ; Thomas calls it sermonem Teutonicum. It must undoubtedly have been the low-German.

[4] The unknown author in Scriptorib. Amersford. ed. ab A. Matthaei p. 160. Delprat s. 11. Vita Gerh. xv. 1.

[5] Vita Gerh. xv. 1.

[6] In a letter to the Bishop of Utrecht, Ibid. xviii. 22., compare viii. 2, and xiv. 3.

encouraging letter from a dominican monk,[1]) Gerhard was too well acquainted with the world to indulge in security. He knew that in all he did, the suspicion and hatred of the common clergy and monks followed his steps, and hence he usually kept a notary and two witnesses at his side, in order not to be without counsel and help, in the event of being accused of breaking the laws of the Church.[2] But nevertheless he was ere long arrested in his labours. Although entertaining a sincere respect for the Spiritual profession and its better members, he attacked with the most unsparing severity the corrupt manners of the clergy, especially of such as led unchaste lives;[3] in consequence of which, many enemies rose against him, and in spite of his own modest protest,[4] and the zealous intercession of a friend and admirer[5] with the Bishop of Utrecht, prevailed upon that otherwise well-disposed prelate, to withdraw from Gerhard his general license to preach. William of Salvarvilla, a person of consequence, and chanter to the university of Paris, endeavoured to procure, through Urban VI., the revocation of this prohibition, by a letter[6] depicting in the brightest colours Gerhard's zeal for the faith, his moral purity, and disinterested exertions; but in vain. Gerhard himself might easily have roused the people, already provoked on other grounds, against the clergy, and have defied the Bishop. He, however, submitted saying, "They are our superiors, we will do what is right, and obey their commands."[7]

But as in general the apparent obstacles to good serve only to promote it, so in the present case, the restraint put upon Gerhard, only directed his activity into the proper channel, in which it was productive of far more important consequences. He now confined

[1] Delprat ix. 3.

[2] Ibid. p. 11.

[3] Vit. Gerh. xviii. 1. One of Gerhard's severe invectives against immoral clergymen is still extant. It has been furnished with a supply of learned notes, by Th. A. Clarisse, and printed in the Archiv für Holländische Kirchengeschichte Th. 1. s. 364. Respecting the immorality of the clergymen of this country and age, see Le Long Reform. van Amsterd. p. 169. Brandt Hist. Reform. i. 50.

[4] See vita Gerh. xviii. 1.

[5] Ibid. xviii. 22.

[6] Ibid. xviii. 23.

[7] Ibid. ix. 1. Daventr. illustr. p. 30.

himself to a quiet and circumscribed, but more secure sphere of labour, in which his mind found a congenial home.

For this object, a foundation was already laid. Not long before, Gerhard had made a journey of great consequence to him on many accounts, but which now determined the course of his life. Accompanied by an intimate friend who was of one heart and soul with himself, by name John *Cele*,[1] the worthy rector of the School at Zwoll, and by a pious layman, an artist,[2] also called Gerhard, in the year 1378, he visited the monastery of Grünthal, in order to become acquainted personally[3] with one whom he had long known by his writings, the far-famed mystic, Ruysbroek. Surprised partly by the simplicity of the monastery, but still more by the mingled dignity and cheerfulness in the character of the prior, Gerhard tarried for several days with the kind and much experienced old man,[4] conversed with him upon passages of Scripture and other subjects connected with the inward life, and received deep impressions both from his discourse and personal qualities, as well as from all around him. On Gerhard expressing to the old master his surprise that he should have written on topics so sublime, considering the envy and detraction which he thereby entailed, Ruysbroek replied,[5] "I am firmly convinced that I have not written a single word, except under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, and in the special and gracious presence of the Holy Trinity. You will one day perceive the truth even of those of my statements which now seem dark to you; but not so your companion." On another occasion, Gerhard having alluded to the pains of hell, the fervour of Divine love blazed forth in Ruysbroek with unusual strength, and

[1] For an account of this efficient schoolmaster, see Delprat s. 31, and the quotations there.

[2] Thomas calls him Gerhardus Calopifex.

[3] A more detailed account of this journey may be found in the Vita Gerh. x., and in the Biography of Ruysbroek, prefixed to Arnold's edition of his writings. Offenb. 1701. Kap. 8. 11. s. 8—12.

[4] Thomas à Kempis describes him as aetate grandaevus, affabilitate sernus, morum honestate reverendus.

[5] The biography of Ruysbroek by an anonymous author, chap. viii., Arnold Kirch. und Ketz. Hist. 1. 554.

he cried out, "I know for certain that I am ready to endure all that God allots to me, life or death, or even the torments of hell." The part of his character which most astonished Gerhard, was the complete mortification and deadness of his self-love, and the perfect concord of his will with God's. He wrote afterwards to the brethren in Grünthal that he had never loved or honoured any mortal so warmly as their prior, and that he was willing to serve him for a footstool both in the present life and in that which is to come. At the same time he expresses the liveliest desire and longing for the company of his friends there, in order to refresh and invigorate himself by imbibing their spirit. This leads us to a further subject.

It was not the personal qualities of Ruysbroek alone which had made so deep an impression upon Gerhard, but the whole *social life of the Canons in Grünthal.* A family-spirit reigned among them, and put them all upon a level. Ruysbroek himself, although the prior, executed the humblest offices, while, on the other hand, those brothers, whose duties related to external things, as, for instance, the cook John,[1] were treated as friends, and taken into consultation in all spiritual affairs. The canons of Grünthal actually realized the idea of a brotherhood. The remembrance of this remained indelible on the soul of Gerhard, and was obviously his guiding star in all that took rise and form under his hands. The connection between the two is self-evident, and has been expressly affirmed by Thomas à Kempis.[2] He relates that, impressed by the edifying and simple life of Ruysbroek and his brethren, Gerhard thenceforth felt himself determined to form an institution of a similar kind.

In the first instance, outward circumstances also led to the execution of this project. On leaving Grünthal, Gerhard, in company with Cele, had extended his journey to Paris, and there expended a considerable sum in the purchase of works which

[1] Johannes Affliginiensis, an uneducated layman, but who, besides practising his calling, lived in the observance of the most rigid ascetic rule, and constant spiritual contemplation. He frequently gave lessons and admonitions on Divine things to the Canons. For an account of him († 1377), see Engelhardt's Ruysbroek, s. 326. John Cacabus, cook of the brother-house in Deventer, seems to have been such another. Thomas à Kempis has done him the honour of writing his life.

[2] Vita Gerh. xv. 3.

seemed particularly important for the instruction of youth. On his return he again fixed his abode at Deventer; and here it was that his love for activity, and especially for tuition, received a new direction. Prohibited from exercising it among the people, he turned to the youth. Gerhard had always loved the society of young men. Among these his most familiar acquaintances were John Binkerink from Zütphen, a clergyman of great piety and moral earnestness, who shared in his devotional exercises and apostolic wanderings,[1] and next to him, Florentius,[2] a richly endowed and highly educated scholar. In Deventer there was a considerable school. The youth who frequented it, and especially a great number of those who were destined for the clerical profession, attached themselves to Gerhard; who, on his part, when requested, advised them about the prosecution of their studies, maintained with them scientific intercourse, read good books, entertained many of them at his table, and procured them the opportunity of earning a little money.

In this last respect, the *copying of books* was of great consequence. His affection for Holy Scripture and the ancient Fathers kindled in Gerhard's bosom the liveliest zeal for collecting the records of Christian antiquity. He was, as he himself says, avaricious—and more than avaricious—of good books.[3] Nor was it merely their external beauty for which he cared;[4] although he believed that the Sacred Scriptures, and other useful works, ought to be particularly well written, and carefully preserved,[5] in order to be all the more extensively useful. Hence, he had long before employed young men, under his oversight, as copyists, thereby accomplishing the threefold end of multiplying these good theological works;[6] giving profitable employment to the youths, and obtaining an opportunity of influencing their minds. This he continued more and more to do. The circle of his youthful friends, scholars, and transcribers, became from day to day larger, and grew at length into a regular society. Having thus in part owed its origin to the copying of the Scriptures and devotional

[1] Vita Gerh. xii. 1.
[2] Vita Florent. iv. 1.
[3] Vita Gerh. xiii. 1.
[4] He himself used quite a plain breviary. Ibid. xiii. 2.
[5] Ibid. xiii. 2. [6] Ibid. ix. 2.

books, the Society from the outset, and through its whole continuance, made the Holy Scripture and its propagation, the copying, collecting, preserving, and utilizing of good theological and ascetical books, one of its main objects.

The immediate impulse from without to the *institution of the fellowship*, was as follows. The young Florentius, whom we have already mentioned, then vicar at Deventer, one day said to Gerhard, "Dear master, what harm would it do were I and these clerks, who are here copying, to put our weekly earnings into a common fund and live together?"—"Live together!" replied Gerhard, "the mendicant monks would never permit it; they would do their worst to prevent us."—"But what," said Florentius, "is to prevent us making the trial? Perhaps God would give us success."—"Well, then," said Gerhard, "in God's name commence. I will be your advocate, and faithfully defend you against all who rise up against you."[1] In this manner they formed themselves into a private society; and, as their manner of living in community was imitated, they grew at length into an extensive confederation.

This society of *the Common Lot* bore a certain resemblance to the philosophical and ascetical confederations of Gentiles and Jews in ancient times; but was more free, open, and practical. It was also akin to Monachism, but more unrestricted, and imbued with a purer and nobler spirit. The members were called, Brethren of the Common Lot, or Brethren of Good-will, *Fratres collationarii*, *Jeronymians*, and *Gregorians*.[2] In their mode of life and pursuits they constituted *a union of brethren*, conformed as far as the circumstances of the times would permit to the *apostolical pattern*.[3] Combined for the cultivation of genuine piety, they pro-

[1] Daventr. illustr. p. 30.

[2] They were called *Fratres bonae voluntatis*, *Broeders van goeden wil*, on account of their practical Christianity, and benevolent dispositions; Fratres collationarii, Collaatsiebroeders, in allusion to their religious meetings, at which the people received a sort of spiritual repast, called *Collatien*; Gregorians, and often Hieronymians, according as they made choice of Gregory or Jerome, as Patron Saint of their Institution (. . . quod sibi Hieronymum patronum elegerint, eo quod auctor instituti sui [Gerhardus M.] non esset in divorum numerum relatus, licet Hieronymiani vere non sint. Daventr. illustr. p. 70), moreover, *Fraterherren* and *Devoti Clerici*.

[3] Ad Apostolicae vitae normam, says Andreae Bibl. Belg. p. 218,

cured for themselves the means of a simple livelihood, partly like the Apostle Paul by manual labour, and partly by receiving voluntary donations, which, however, no one was permitted to solicit, except in a case of urgent necessity. To ensure their common subsistence, and in token of their fraternal affection, they had introduced among them the principle of a *community of goods*. In most cases each member surrendered what property he possessed for the use of the society. There seems, however, to have been, at least in the infancy of the institution, no strict and general law upon the subject, such as obtained in the societies of the Pythagoreans and Essenes. All was to proceed from freedom and love. Imitating the Church at Jerusalem, and prompted by brotherly affection, they mutually shared with each other their earnings and property, or consecrated also their fortune, if they possessed any, to the service of the community.[1] From this source, and from donations and legacies made to them, arose the *Brother-houses*, in each of which a certain number of members lived together, subjected, it is true, in dress, diet, and general way of life, to an appointed rule, but yet not conventually sequestered from the world, with which they maintained constant intercourse, and in such a way as, in opposition to Monachism, to preserve the principle of individual liberty. Their whole rule was to be observed not from constraint, but from the sole motive of good-will constantly renewed, and all obedience, even the most unconditional,[2] was to be paid freely and affectionately, and for God's sake.

The grand object of the Societies was the establishment, exemplification, and spread of practical Christianity. This they endeavoured to accomplish, in the first instance, among themselves, by the whole style of their association, by the moral rigour and simplicity of their manner of living, by religious con-

as descriptive of the nature of the corporation. Thomas à Kempis himself remarks that Florentius became the author of the Fraternity: sacræ Apostolicae vitae cum suis Presbyteris et Clericis formam humiliter imitando. Vita Joh. Gronde i. 3. Hence in Ghent, and probably elsewhere, the members bore the name of Brethren of the Twelve Apostles. Delprat s. 51.

[1] Delprat s. 92.

[2] *Sponte* namque se Deo dicantes omnes Rectori suo aut ejus vicario obedire satagebant. Vit. Joh. Gronde i. 3.

versations, mutual confessions, admonitions, lectures, and social exercises of devotion. For the promotion of the same object outwardly, they laboured by transcribing and propagating sacred Scripture and proper religious treatises, but most of all by the instruction of the common people in Christianity, and the revival and improvement of the education of youth. In this last department they form an epoch. It is true that at a much earlier date schools had been instituted in the chief cities of the Netherlands, as for example at Gravesande in 1322, at Leyden in 1324, at Rotterdam in 1328, at Schiedam in 1336, at Delft in 1342, at Hoorn in 1358, at Haarlem in 1389, and at Alkmaar in 1390. But for the most part these schools were not purely scientific. They were at the same time financial enterprises of the towns. The right to set up a school was leased. The consequence was that wages were exacted from the scholars, such as only the more wealthy could pay; while the whole style of the institutions was very defective.[1] Nor was the instruction imparted by the monks in the conventual schools more satisfactory. It was too superficial, and being universally mingled with coarse and superstitious ingredients, was in many ways at variance with true enlightenment. The Brethren of the Common Lot, on the contrary, not merely gave instruction gratuitously, and thereby rendered the arts of reading and writing attainable by all, both rich and poor,[2] and not merely promoted in every way the progress of the more indigent class of students; but what was of most consequence, they imbued education with quite a new life and a purer and nobler spirit.

The age of Gerhard could not justly be called ignorant; but it was filled to repletion with a false, abstruse, and unprofitable sort of knowledge; and although the philosophy of not knowing, or rather of knowing that we know nothing,[3] is not in general

[1] Compare Delprat s. 113.

[2] Delprat s. 117.

[3] Gerhard says, "The science of sciences is to know that one knows nothing." See the article by Th. Adr. Clarisse in the kirchenhist. Archiv Th. i. s. 362. In so far as they were themselves concerned with philosophy, Gerhard and his scholars took the side of Nominalism against that of Realism, and inclined to the Platonists, in opposition to the Aristotelians. Compare Delprat, s. 100 and s. 122. This, however, arose more from general congeniality of mind, than from acquaintance with philosophical principles.

the highest and richest species of science, still for such an age it is a great blessing, as tending to recall it from an imaginary omniscience to humbleness and sobriety. As of old in the time of Socrates, it was of essential necessity to bring men back to themselves, and philosophy down from heaven to earth, so the contemporaries of Gerhard had no more urgent want than to be conducted from a presumptuous speculation, which became from day to day more subtile and hopeless, and with which they were surfeited, to a modest and practical wisdom better adapted to human life. This is the point of view from which we must contemplate the course of studies which he prescribed to the scholars in the Fraternities, in order both to understand and excuse its one-sidedness and narrow bounds. His circle of knowledge, no doubt, according to our ideas and exigencies, and the general spirit of science, was far too circumscribed, excluding as it did, geometry, arithmetic, rhetoric, logic, grammar, lyric poetry,[1] and other such subjects. This contractedness, however, appears less scanty and meagre, when we consider that, with a true sense of the deep wants of the age, Gerhard acted with a view to the requirements of life, and upon the principle, in which the whole spirit of his labours is expressed, viz., "All that does not either improve us or restrain us from evil, is injurious." Hence although raised far above the principle of mere outward expediency in the appreciation of the sciences, there were still many laudable, and even necessary branches of knowledge, the acquisition of which, as not directly bearing upon morality and a religious life, appeared to him an unprofitable waste of time. Hence in scientific pursuits he rejected all that tended to mere display or fomented the passions, such as learned disputations or the acquisition of academical degrees. Hence he warned students against mingling selfish objects, especially in the study of the sciences which promise large remuneration, such as medicine and jurisprudence, and in these dissuaded any of the brethren from aspiring to a degree. In fine, for the same reason he discarded from the plan of study,[2] magic and astrology, as being an unprofitable attempt to dive into the mysterious, and was desi-

[1] Vita Gerh. xviii. 5. Kirchenhist. Archiv Th. 2. s. 275 and 276.

[2] See respecting all this, the Conclusa et proposita at the end of Vita Gerh. xviii. 6.

rous that all should be founded upon the word of God,[1] and especially upon the Gospels as its vital centre. To this were to be added, the best of the Church Fathers and useful selections from the heathen moralists,[2] but all with a view to self-acquaintance, improvement, and progress in true piety. "Let the root of thy studies,"[3] says Gerhard, "and the mirror of thy life be first of all the Gospel, for in it is contained the life of Christ, next the biographies and sayings of the Fathers (of these Gerhard himself, at the request of some of his admirers had drawn up several small collections),[4] afterwards the Epistles of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles, and finally, the devotional works of Bernhard, Anselm, Augustine, and others." The writings of Solomon were held to be of inferior importance to these. An order of arrangement in which the biographies of the saints have a higher place than the Epistles of Paul, and the Gospels as containing the life of Christ, the highest of all, evinces that Gerhard preferred that which is essentially Christian to that which is not, and whatever directly influences the life to the merely didactic. By this endeavour, confined in its range, but for that reason all the more powerful, to raise up a system of wisdom calculated effectually to ameliorate life, the institutions of Gerhard constituted a turning point in the general system of juvenile and popular education, and their beneficial effects soon displayed themselves so convincingly that in a brief space of time, and at different places in Holland, Gelders, and Brabant, in Friesland, Westphalia, and even as far as Saxony, Brother-houses were erected.

Gerhard did not assume a hostile attitude either towards Scholasticism or the dominant Church. His patron, William of Salvarvillà, could write to the Pope,[5] that he was thoroughly

[1] Vita Gerh. xxviii. 11.

[2] The works which the brothers principally used in addition to the Gospels were the *Meditationes* of St Bernard, the *Monologium* of Anselm of Canterbury, Extracts from Eusebius, Cyril, and Chrysostom, from Augustine and Beda among the Latin Fathers, and from Plato, Seneca, and Virgil, among classical authors. Comp. Delprat s. 99.

[3] Vita Gerh. xxviii. 11.

[4] Ibid. xiii. 3.

[5] The letter is introduced at the end of Vita Gerh. xviii. 3.

orthodox, zealous for the unity of the Church, and a powerful opponent of heretics. He himself could assure his Bishop,[1] that "he always, and on all points, humbly subjects himself to the sentence of the Holy Church of Rome." In every respect he evinced himself to be a rigid Churchman, daily attended mass,[2] kept the fasts and other ecclesiastical observances,[3] carried mortification far beyond the usual bounds, and was a warm admirer of the priesthood. In his eyes priests were above all others the light of the world, the salt of the earth, mediators between God and man, and stewards of the graces[4] of heaven. The priestly office and its responsibility appeared to him so high, that he would on no account take the burden of them upon his conscience. Notwithstanding all this, however, Gerhard by his silent labours in the very bosom of Scholasticism and the hierarchy, helped to pave the way for emancipation from both. Nay, he was even in some measure a reformer himself. With his high conception of the church and priesthood, he required that these should be pure and vital, and in every respect worthy of their founder and origin. He insisted with the greatest earnestness upon the use of the Holy Scriptures, and the multiplication and diffusion of copies[5] of them. He exercised, and called on others to exercise, an incessant study, and a more and more thorough search into their meaning, and was here ready to receive instruction from the most humble.[6] In the Scriptures, however, he chiefly sought that which is vital and efficacious, viz., Christ as delineated in the Gospels, the root and mirror of life,[7] the sole foundation of the Church.[8] The primitive apostolical Church shone in his eyes as the model of perfection. In it he found a piety and fervour of zeal which, in his own days, he no longer beheld.[9]

[1] Gerhard's Protestation, ibid. xviii. 1.
[2] Ibid. xii. 4.
[3] Ibid. xi. 4.
[4] Gerhard's discourse against the *Focaristi* in Kist und Royaard's Kirchenhist. Archiv i. 372—375, ii. 295.
[5] Vita Gerh. xiii. 1, 2.
[6] Ibid. Sect. 1.
[7] Ibid. xviii. 11.
[8] Protest. Ibid. xviii. 1.
[9] Conclusa et Propos. xviii. 15, Religio stetit in vigore et culmine, *quae est jam antiquata.*

Hence he desired to see, if not all, yet at least the more important, rites remodelled after its pattern. The main object of his labours was to restore and reorganize a genuine spiritual priesthood, and to combat its corruptions, as then existing. The priest, in Gerhard's view, ought not to strive after ecclesiastical and scientific dignities, but humbly and disinterestedly to have God, and only God, in his eye. Neither ought he to serve a Cardinal or other spiritual or temporal lord, for the purpose of acquiring benefices, or secular property, or gain of any sort.[1] "The first qualification," says Gerhard,[2] "is to have no desire for a benefice, and not to set our hope upon temporal good at all. For the more I possess, the more avaricious I become. Consistently with the pattern of the primitive church, you cannot hold a plurality of benefices.[3] . . . . . And the more the benefices and estates belonging to me, the more the persons to whom I am subservient and by whom I am molested; this, however, is inconsistent with that liberty of mind which is the chief blessing in the spiritual life."[4] Nor did he less keenly assail their incontinence, than the ambition and avarice of the clergy. In an ecclesiastical assembly held at Utrecht in 1383, he made a speech[5] against the *focaristi*, which means clergy who had young housekeepers (focariæ). In this he proceeds upon the principle of founding all upon Scripture in the first instance, and upon the sayings of the Fathers in the second.[6] On the same basis he unfolds the lofty idea of the priesthood,[7] and among other things observes of it, "If it be power to which you look, is not the Pope mightier as being a priest, than as being a Pope,"[8] and then warmly vents his indignation at the licentiousness of the clergy. He says, "Take the case of a lewd priest. Here are two words; the *priest* I reve-

[1] Ibid. xviii. 4.
[2] Ibid. xviii. 3.
[3] Secundum Ecclesiam primitivam.
[4] Et est contra libertatem spiritus, *quae est principale bonum in vita spirituali.* We find these identical words in Thomas à Kempis. They seem to have been a sort of received maxim with the Brethren of the Common Lot.
[5] What remains of it has been printed in Kist und Royaard's Kirchenhist. Archiv B. 1. s. 364 sq.
[6] Ibid. s. 368, 369.
[7] Ibid. s. 374, 375.
[8] Ibid. s. 377.

rence and love, but the *lewd* person I hate and abominate.[1] . . . . . The scandal caused by such a character, when it becomes known, spreads in wide circles, for, on account of his high position he enjoys the more honour. Wherefore I exhort you, ye worthy priests, forsake and depart from such, and refuse to come into contact with any one so defiled."[2] All this evidently contains germs of reform, and in Gerhard's community these were soon fostered into farther growth.

It had also been the intention of Gerhard to found a convent of regular Canons, who should in a manner exemplify the life which he judged to be the best and most profitable. But death prevented the execution of his scheme. He died quite as he had lived. The plague, which at the time was raging in Deventer, attacked one of his friends. Gerhard, who possessed some experience in the medical art,[3] hastened intrepidly to his help; and was himself smitten. He had before often wished for death,[4] and now when he felt it obviously approaching, he met it with exemplary resignation, saying, "Lo, I am now summoned by the Lord. The hour of my departure is come. Augustine and Bernhard are knocking at the door. The limit appointed me by God I cannot pass." To the brethren who stood weeping around his bed and lamenting the irreparable loss of their master, he said, "Set your confidence in God, my dear friends, and fear not what the men of this world may say. Be steadfast, for man cannot prevent what God has determined to accomplish. . . . Behold, my beloved scholar *Florentius*, on whom the spirit of the Lord rests, will be your father and director. Let him be to you all that I have been. Obey him. I know no one in whom I have greater confidence, or who more deserves to be loved and honoured by you as a father."[5] In this manner, Gerhard breathed

[1] Ibid. s. 372.

[2] Ibid. s. 378.

[3] Delprat s. 12.

[4] Vita Gerh. xii. 5. Once, when burning with the desire of eternal life, he said to one of the brethren, "What have I any longer to do here on earth? O that I were with my master in heaven!" The scholar remarked to him how necessary his labours were. Gerhard, however, relied on the divine power of the work itself, and had not so high an opinion of himself, as to fancy that no other could supply his place.

[5] Vit. Gerh. xvi. 1—2.

his last in his native city, upon the 20th of August 1384, and at the age of forty four.[1] He was interred with great solemnity in the church of St Mary, which had often rung with his living voice, and the sorrow for him was universal.[2]

Gerhard lived and died highly honoured by his contemporaries. His name has spread not merely in his native country, but through the whole of Germany.[3] The reverence which was paid to him bears in some measure the colour of his times; but he was worthy of it, for his life was but the expression of his spirit, and his spirit was filled with the zeal of divine love. In his biography by Thomas à Kempis we find the following traits.[4] His mental endowments, a natural acuteness, a retentive memory, a flowing diction, and a particular talent for admonitory discourse, were aided by admirable moral qualities, and an expressive exterior. Gerhard had a cheerful countenance,[5] and a calm mind. He was affable in conversation, modest in his whole appearance, temperate in life, sagacious in counsel, prudent in his judgments, severe towards vice, ardent in doing good. He eschewed sloth, loved simplicity, penetrated to the spiritual, and had God always before his eyes.[6] So great was his moderation that he usually satisfied himself with one meal in the day. It was even his wont, although he had no particular experience in the art, to prepare the food.[7] He never accepted invitations; but occasionally enter-

[1] The whole property left behind him by Gerhard consisted of a few old articles of furniture, coarse clothing, and pious writings. These, however, were treated by his admirers as relics. Even while living he had been reverenced as a saint, and singular revelations and a high degree of prophetic vision were ascribed to him. Ibid. xii. 5. This continued to be done even after his death. They came to visit his cell. Thomas à Kempis, although he had never personally seen him (quem licet in carne non viderim. . . Ibid. Prolog), tells us, however, that he had at least seen the place of his abode, Cap. vi. 2, and relates that they preserved the hair-cloth shirt which he had worn next his skin, and a fur mantle (pellicium) belonging to him, devotis exemplare et posteris sanctum memoriale. Cap. xi. 5. Comp. vii. 2 at the end.

[2] Ibid. xvi. 5. In the year 1697 when demolishing the walls of the old brother-house at Deventer, Gerhard's skull, together with that of Florentius, is said to have been found. Foppens Bibl. Belg. i. 356.

[3] Trithemius de Script. Eccl. c. 656, p. 154: Erat non solum doctrina, sed etiam vita religiosa et laudabili conversatione *in tota Germania nominatus.*

[4] Vita Gerh. xi. [5] Ibid. xiv. 4. [6] Ibid. xiv. 1.

[7] Ibid. xi. 2.

tained friends and respectable citizens at his own house. On such occasions before dinner, a passage of Scripture was read, and made the subject of conversation.[1] Opposite the table there stood a small library, from which at any time a book might be taken to enliven the conversation. Gerhard's discourse was full of matter, serious but seasoned with wit. His raiment was usually of a gray colour, so plain, that only those who knew, either noticed or saluted him.[2] He was more likely to attract observation by the negligence of his dress. His greatest passion was for books, which he collected with incessant eagerness. These and some poor pieces of furniture were the only property he left behind him, although he possessed a large patrimony, and donations were continually flowing in upon him.

Of the works left behind him by Gerhard, other authors have recently treated with care and ability.[3] For us the subject would be too prolix. Let us then merely place upon the grave, as it were, of this good man, some of the *Rules of Life* and *Moral Sayings*[4] most characteristic of his spirit. They serve at the same time to evince that in the development of pure practical mysticism, Gerhard constitutes an essential member. Having himself received the impulse from John Ruysbroek, he transplanted the spirit to his favourite disciple Florentius, and he in his turn to Thomas à Kempis. *Thomas à Kempis* had never seen Gerhard, at the time of whose death he was only four years old, but in the maxims which we are about to cite, it is impossible not to recognise the school from which the book on the Imitation of Christ has proceeded; and it must be evident to every one who contemplates the monuments of that age and circle, that Thomas à Kempis was but a link in a great chain of evolutions, that he

[1] Ibid. xi. 1—2. [2] Ibid. xi. 5—6.

[3] Particularly Th. Adr. and J. Clarisse in the article repeatedly quoted. Among old authors see Tritheim de Script. Eccl. c. 656, p. 154, Andreae Bibl. Belg. p. 277. Foppens i. 354. Fabric. Bibl. med. iii. 117.

[4] The most of these are to be found in Vita Gerh. Cap. xviii. under the title Conclusa et proposita, non vota (oaths such as were taken by the monks) in nomine Domini a Magistro Gerardo edita. Others in Kist und Royaard's Kirchen-hist. Archiv Th. i. s. 361. Th. ii. s. 294, 300, 305, 306.

trained himself according to an existing school and tradition, and that his blossoms derived their sap from a stock whose roots were Ruysbroek and Gerhard Groot. There is something particularly attractive in the mixture of the serious and gentle, in the sayings of Gerhard. Moral strictness is particularly conspicuous in the following: "Turn away thy heart from the creatures even with violence, that thus thou mayest conquer thyself, and point thy mind continually to God.—It is necessary that every Christian, from pure motives, should forsake himself, and be devoted to God.—A man should not suffer his mind to be discomposed for the sake of anything in the world.—It is a great point to obey in things which are irksome and difficult; and that is the true kind of obedience.—Above all, and at all times, exercise thyself in humility, chiefly in the heart within, but likewise outwardly before men.—The farther a man knows himself to be from perfection, so much the nearer is he to it.—As long as a man finds something about him to amend, he is in a good state.—The greatest temptation is not to be tempted at all.—The beginning of vain glory, is to please one's self.—Never breathe a word calculated to shew you off as very pious or very learned.—Nothing is a better test of a man than hearing himself praised.—We ought not to study any art, or write any book, or undertake any journey or labour, or exercise any practical science for the purpose of extending our fame, or obtaining promotion and gratitude, or leaving behind us a memorial among men.—Dispute with no one who will not listen to you, or yield to truth.—Never interfere in quarrels, except to settle them, when that can be quickly and quietly done." Along with this rigour we find in other maxims of Gerhard an amiable suavity and cheerfulness, and an enlarged liberality which, like the interest taken by the Apostle Paul in his friends and disciples, likewise extends to the circumstances of the outward life. Of this description are the following rules: "Let thy hope of eternal salvation be always greater than thy fears of hell.—Above all things rejoice in spirit, exercise yourself in reading, watching, and prayer, but always subject to the law of moderation.—We awaken with the same thoughts with which we go to bed; it is therefore useful at that time to pray, read the psalms, and reflect.—Do not be discouraged on account of minor faults." Among the many dietetic precepts

of Gerhard I will only note the few that follow. "Take pains that your sleep may be sound.—Guard against eating quickly and greedily.—In very cold weather, you may eat more than at other times, but, according to the doctrine of Hippocrates, only once a-day. This is likewise a good defence against cold.—You may then also sleep an hour or half an hour longer." The worthy man delivers no less admirable directions on the subject of pastoral theology. Of the true priest he requires:[1]— "Whoever wishes to undertake the care of souls in a worthy manner, ought above all things to have a pure intention. A pure intention, however, requires of him, that he seek the glory of God and the salvation of souls as his chief object, and it will be a test of this if he undertake the pastoral office, even when no temporal advantage is connected with it, and solely for the work's own sake, provided he have sufficient means from other sources to support himself and those dependent upon *him*. Were a clergyman to know that another would guide the flock better, he ought to desire to see that person in the office rather than himself.—What zeal for the souls of others can that man feel who has never been zealous about his own; for the zeal of love, if genuine, always begins with self.—The sermon of the minister whose life is despised will be little valued.—Great love is due to a good pastor, but, on the other hand, the good shepherd also gives even his life for the sheep.

CHAPTER SECOND.

FLORENTIUS RADEWINS, AND THE MORE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETIES.

The men who succeeded Gerhard in the oversight of his institutions, or constituted their spiritual centre, advanced in the

[1] It is interesting to compare with the directions which Gerhard and the Brethren in general propose to the priest, what Luther in a kindred sense delivers respecting the *Ratio vivendi sacerdotum*, among the letters in De Wette's edition. Th. i. s. 271—273.

direction which he had originally given them, and by improvements and additions to the work, imparted to it an ever-increasing importance.[1] His immediate successor was *Florentius Radewin* or *Radewins*.[2] He may be considered as the second founder of the society, and contributed even more than Gerhard himself to the full development of its institutions.[3]

Florentius, born about the year 1350, was the son of a respectable and opulent citizen of Leerdam, by name Radewin. With a liberal provision from his father, he visited the University of Prague, then in a highly flourishing condition and generally preferred by the youth of the Netherlands, and there took the degree of Master of Arts.[4] On his return home he became a hearer of Gerhard, who at the time was making his apostolical tour through the Diocese of Utrecht, and was deeply affected by his preaching.[5] Nor was it long before he formed his personal acquaintance with him, and entered into the closest friendship.[6] Full of energy, he endeavoured to inflame others[7] with the fire which burned in his own breast, and collected about him a circle of young men, some of them scientifically educated, all desirous of devoting themselves to a pious, simple, and apostolical life, and who, without any formal vow of obedience, acknowledged him as their director.[8] Resigning the canonry of St Peter's in Utrecht, he removed to Deventer, where, at the desire of Gerhard, he was ordained a priest, and became vicar at St Lebuin's. He was the first member of the society who received priest's orders, and Gerhard observed on the occasion, "Once only have I been the cause of ordaining any one to be a priest. I hope, however, he will prove a worthy one."[9]

[1] Daventr. illustr. p. 84 sq.

[2] That is Radewin's son, Floris Radewijnszon. Respecting this remarkable man, see his life by Thomas à Kempis. Revii Daventr. illustr. p. 30, 34, 84. Andreæ Bibl. Belg. p. 218. Foppens Biblioth. Belg. T. i. p. 279. Dumbar Analecta T. i. p. 7, 12—52. Kerkelijk en Wereldl. Deventer p. 603. Delprat s. 13, 32, 41, 82. Beilage xiv.

[3] In this sense Thomas styles the Brethren of the Common Lot, Florentigenæ. Vita Arnoldi Schoonhov. sect. 6.

[4] Vita Flor. iv. 2, 3. Daventr. illustr. p. 34.

[5] Vita Flor. vi. 1, 2.

[6] Ibid. vii. 1, 2.

[7] Ibid. viii. 1.

[8] Ibid. viii. 2.

Ibid. x. 2.

Florentius was even a less accomplished scholar than Gerhard, and never willingly involved himself in subtle questions or profound speculations that could not minister to edification.[1] He possessed, however, all the qualities of a practical man, viz., an indefatigable activity, a great talent for managing and governing others, an attractive amiableness, combined with a something that commanded reverence. Thomas à Kempis gives the following sketch of him.[2] He was of noble manners, and in a high degree modest, cheerful in the company of friends, affable and generous, of a pleasant cast of features, moderate stature, and handsome figure. His mere appearance inspired the young with veneration;[3] and the rest of the canons and vicars never dared to utter in his presence a light or indecent word. It was said of him by an acquaintance, "There is no man for whom I have so much affection, and of whom I am also so much afraid, as Master Florentius." When he was compelled to find fault, no one ventured to gainsay or to excuse himself. In pious exercises he was as zealous as Gerhard, and even more rigid in mortification, denying himself not merely superfluities but even necessaries. He sometimes fasted so long as to lose all appetite and taste.[4] Sometimes he also carried simplicity in dress the length of singularity, and is said on one occasion to have enquired of a tailor, greatly to his astonishment, whether he could make an old coat.[5] He despised flattery of all kinds. Having once received a letter full of commendation, he cast it away, saying, "If that was all you had to say, you might as well have been silent." He considered no occupation as too humble for him, not even the service of the kitchen,[6]

[1] Vita Flor. xxiii. 3, 4. Here, among other things, it is said, De altis quaestionibus et subtilibus rebus et intricatis negotiis omnino tacuit, sciens quod parvam aedificationem devotis mentibus praestant. A converted Rabbi who wished to discuss with him some difficult questions of the Old Testament, he referred merely to simple faith in Christ Jesus, and the manifestation of it in the life.

[2] Ibid. cap. v.

[3] Ibid. xi. 2, 3.

[4] Ibid. xvii. 1.

[5] Ibid. xii. 4. At xii. 2, his dress is minutely described. Compare ix. 2.

[6] Ibid. xiii. 2. Tenuit etiam ipsa in coquina vicem suam pro posse.

which, after the example of Gerhard, all the brethren used to undertake in their turn. His attention to the poor and afflicted was inexhaustible. He often sent them food from his own table, and the spiceries which he himself had received in presents.[1] On St Gregory's day he usually entertained twelve poor students, imitating the example of the Pope, who is said to have had that number of paupers at his table. In the spring he used to prepare medicinal herb-baths for the weak and infirm; and as often as he could, distributed clothes among the indigent.[2] Nor did he take less interest in boys and young men, drawing them by his kindness around him, stimulating them by admonition and encouragement, making them presents of writing materials and books, and forwarding in every way their progress in true religion, as well as in learning.[3] Thomas à Kempis, who himself had probably experienced this in his youth, says, "Though all be silent, yet will not I refrain, but will for ever extol the benevolence of Florentius, which has so often done me good."[4] Highly, too, was the advice of a man of so great experience valued. "I never followed the advice of Master Florentius," was once said by a person,[5] "without having good success, whereas the very contrary was the case when I acted on my own opinion." Hence he was constantly resorted to by people of all descriptions, some of them of high rank and consequence in society.[6] The crowd round his door was often so great that he could with difficulty leave his house, or find time for religious exercises and the supply of his wants.[7] But he dismissed no one without either satisfying him at once, or appointing some more convenient hour for an interview.

Like Gerhard, Florentius delivered to the brethren *rules of Christian wisdom*,[8] from among which I select the following as characteristic of his spirit:—"You will have a good conscience and a sound understanding, if you conform your life wholly to Sacred Scripture, and interpret it, not according to your own fancy, but as the Saints have done.—The books of Holy

[1] Vita Flor. xv. 2. [2] Ibid. xvi. 1, 2, 4. [3] Ibid. xv. 3.
[4] Ibid. xv. 3, xvi. 4. [5] Ibid. xxiv. 3. [6] Ibid. x. 1.
[7] Ibid. xiv. 3.
[8] They occur in the Vita Florent. at the end: Quaedam notabilia verba Domini Florentii.

Scripture are to be kept as the best treasure of the Church.[1] —In doing what is good, do it simply and purely for the glory of God, and wholly without self-seeking.—The emotions and thoughts which rise in our heart are not in our own power. But it lies with us by reading, prayer, and reflection, to implant that which is good in our hearts, until the forbidden motions are overcome, and through God's grace depart.—Better is a small measure of the Spirit, than great learning without piety.—Before embarking in any enterprise, resolve within yourself how you are to behave, and from that resolution do not lightly swerve—Preface every labour with a short prayer.—Accustom yourself to stay in your chamber and read some book until you take pleasure in it, and feel it irksome to leave and pleasant to enter. Fly to thy cell as to a dear friend." The following maxims for our conduct towards others are excellent.—"Never speak ill of any one, unless it be to benefit him or some other.—When you find fault, do it with true pity for the person, as a weak brother.—Do not envy any one for being superior to you in piety or reputation; but love the gifts of God in him, and they will be your own.—It is dangerous to have to do with civil rulers and ecclesiastical dignitaries; rather eschew the worldly and great." The following rules are specially applicable to the Brethren of the Common Lot. "The proper way of living in common is all to will one thing, and think one thing, and comply with the same habits in the Lord.—In every work and custom, let all endeavour to conform to the Society, and make no exception.—Woe to him who cherishes a grudge against another member of the fellowship, or sets himself in opposition to it, or in any way disturbs it!"

Such was the character of the man to whom Gerhard intrusted the management of his young institution. He could not possibly have found a better. We shall now see how Florentius prosecuted the work in the same spirit in which it had been begun. Two years after Gerhard's death, in 1386, he carried into execution

[1] Luther, 62d Thesis: "The real and true treasure of the Church is the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God."

what had been his master's last and dearest wish. In concert with some other disciples of Gerhard, he projected his plan of a *monastery of regular Canons*, which should serve as a centre of counsel and operation for the male and female communities of the Common Lot. William, Duke of Gelders, favoured the undertaking. Several opulent individuals supported it by endowments of landed property, and the same Bishop of Utrecht, Florentius of Wevelinkhoven, who had once interdicted Gerhard from preaching, vouchsafed his approbation. In this manner, the monastery of the Canons of Windesem or Windesheim,[1] in connection with the Brethren of the Common Lot, was set on foot, and was soon followed by several others of the same kind, especially that of Mount St Agnes, near Zwoll.[2] These establishments of regular Canons maintained a constant connection and correspondence with the Brother-houses. Many of the Brethren left the houses to take the vow and become Canons, while others took priests' orders, and entered the proper field of spiritual labour. The Brethren also maintained a friendly relation with the better and stricter monastic orders, the Carthusians, Cistercians, and Benedictines.[3] In this manner Gerhard's institution grew up with a double stem. The Canons of the Common Lot, who were united in convents according to the stricter form of monastic life, constituted its centre, and were more secluded from the world. The larger portion of the Society, with greater freedom of action, and penetrating more deeply into the life of the people, was composed of the ordinary Brethren of the Common Lot, who, again, were partly priests and partly laymen, and either dwelt together in the Fraternities, or severally and dispersed occupied spiritual offices, and employed themselves in the education of youth, although still in constant connection with the parent Society. The monasteries of regular Canons seem not to have fully answered the expectations formed respecting them by Gerhard and Florentius. At first the Brothers at

1 Daventr. illustr., p. 35. Delprat s. 81. There is also a special history of this monastery in the Chronicon Windesemense auctore J. Buschio ed. a Her. Rosweide Antv. 1621.

2 Thomas à Kempis, having been long an inmate of this monastery, has written a history of it, printed after his Chronicon Windesemense in the edition of Rosweide.

3 Vita Florent. xxvii. 2.

Windesheim were very zealous, and displayed great activity, especially in executing manuscripts of the Bible. In this work they even used different copies, and exercised a certain amount of criticism. By degrees, however, their zeal cooled with their growing wealth, and at length they sank into the usual style of monastic life; so that in later times their first question to any new comer was, Whether he was good at eating, sleeping, and obeying.[1] But all the more beautifully did the fraternities advance in Christian sentiment and scientific industry. Here also the labours of Florentius contributed in no common degree to the positive growth and further spread of the institution. Under his direction, and with the encouragement of the Town Council, several Brother-houses had been founded at Deventer; and particularly in the year 1391, a very considerable one, which came in the course of time to be called the rich Brother-house *(het rijke Fraterhuis)*, or the house of Florentius. About the same time, and shortly after, many similar institutions were erected in the principal cities of the Netherlands and Lower Germany.

While presiding as Rector over the institute, Florentius had thus contributed largely towards its growth and extension; but now he too had reached the end of his career. Having already suffered various bodily ailments,[3] probably the consequence of his excessive mortifications,[4] he at last sickened, and was dangerously ill. He partook of the Holy Supper with deep penitential feelings, nominated *Æmilius van Buren*,[5] an intimate and confidential friend, as his successor, and departed this life sixteen years after Gerhard, on the day of the Annunciation, 1400, being, as Thomas à Kempis supposes, about fifty years of age, or at least not much older.[6] Earnest were the admonitions which he delivered from his death-bed to the assembled brethren. Among other things he said: "Abide in humble simplicity, and Christ will

[1] Chronic. Windes. p. 277: An bene posset comedere, dormire et obedire?
[2] Vita Luberti Berneri, sect. 4.
[3] Vita Florent. xvii. 1.
[4] Ibid. xi. 2., xviii. 1, 2.
[5] He was a native of Gelders, and is one of those to whom Thomas à Kempis has devoted a biography, the 8th. His family name was Æmilius von Asche.
[6] Vita Florent. xxviii. 4, 5.

abide in you.[1]" He was interred in the Church of St Lebuin, and on that occasion, a citizen of Deventer was heard to say, "Whether Lebuin was indeed a saint, I do not know, though I believe it; but what I know for certain is, that this man was a holy confessor of God."[2]

It will now be proper to delineate *in its details* the institution which Gerhard had founded, and which Florentius had so admirably fostered.

As a whole, it constituted an intimately connected, but free association, in which, along with a strict unity, sufficient room should, according to the apostolical pattern, be allowed for the development of individual freedom. For the attainment of this end, the unity aimed at was founded, not so much upon outward statutes, as upon an inward spirit; while the freedom accorded to the members was always under the restraint of love. By this means, something great, and of peculiar beauty, might have been called forth, but the blossom lasted only as long as the primitive spirit continued to operate.

Admission into the body did not depend upon a vow binding for life; Nor in the bosom of the fraternities, did strict precepts, regulating minute particulars, as in Monachism, prevail, so much as laudable manners and customs.[3] Two consequences followed. First, as continuance in the Society was an enduring act of free will, whoever continued in it did so with his whole heart. Secondly, as the connection of the whole, and the government of the several houses, were effected from the centre outwards, more than by external means and uniform laws, the Society, as it expanded, displayed a free and rich variety. The different houses had different traditions, forms, and customs; and even within each particular house, attention was paid to peculiarities of character, and the individual treated to a certain degree according to his kind, and allowed to cultivate fully his own particular talents.

[1] Vita Flor. xxviii. 3.

[2] Delprat s. 139.

[3] Vita Arnoldi Schoonhov. sect. 8: *Consuetudines* bonas a senioribus impositas sollicite observabat. And then again: Secundum laudabiles consuetudines domus antiquae.

At the same time, no endeavours were spared to secure unity, both externally and internally. Externally the Brother-houses maintained a constant and active communication with each other, but they had also a sort of constitutional point of union in the *Meeting of their rectors*, corresponding to the conferences of the elders among the Moravians. Annually the Heads of the several houses assembled together,[1] those of the Netherlands, and those of Germany apart, for the purpose of consulting and determining upon the affairs of the community. At the same time the Rector of the principal Brother-house at Deventer formed a kind of natural centre, at least for the Brethren of the Netherlands; more, however, after a patriarchal than a hierarchical fashion. He was looked upon by all as their common father, and even called by that name. A consequence of this paternal relation and authority of the Rectors of Deventer, likewise was, (and the same happened with the governors of the Franconian establishments), that, at the first at least, they were not elected, but in each instance nominated by their predecessors. On his death-bed, Gerhard appointed Florentius, as Florentius in the same circumstances did Æmilius van Buren, for his successor. This apostolical mode of induction only served to increase their authority.

But by far the most powerful principle of unity was the spirit which pervaded the whole corporation, the several domiciles, and all their members. It was the spirit of love, humility, and obedience. As St John, at the approach of death, said to the Church of Ephesus, so with his dying breath spake Æmilius van Buren to the Brethren: "I know not what else to say to you, but what the Lord, at his decease, said to his disciples, Love one another, as Christ loved you, and pray for me."[2] Nor was humility, the denial and renunciation of self, and the utmost readiness to serve others, less urgently inculcated. "Modest subordination," says Thomas,[3] "passed among the brethren from the highest to the lowest, for the first of virtues, and made their earthly house a paradise."[4] With humility, thus renouncing its own things, obedience went hand in hand. This is the grace

[1] Delprat s. 95.
[2] Vita Aemil. Bur. sect. 6.
[3] Humilitas.
[4] Vita Florent. xxi. 1, 2.

which we hear pre-eminently extolled by all the members of the Society, and reverenced as the source of all good. In their view, however, obedience, although unconditional and extending to the smallest things,[1] required to be free, continually produced by love,[2] and thereby essentially distinguished from all servile, and especially monastic, obedience. As the rectors were fathers, so was it the duty of the members to be to them devoted sons, and to each other self-denying and affectionate brethren..

The usual *arrangement of a Brother-house* was as follows: About twenty of them[3] lived together in a domicile; possessing a common fund, and taking their food at a common table. They were again divided into priests, clergy, and laymen. The number of priests was at first very small, because the first brethren, after the example of Gerhard, viewed the spiritual office in all its magnitude and responsibility.[4] Subsequently, however, more of them received ordination as priests, and of these several accepted spiritual offices, and ceased cohabiting with the brethren,[5] whereas others still continued as inmates of their houses. Usually there were four priests, or even more, in a house, and about twice as many so called *Clerici*, with whom were classed the novices, and such laymen as were desirous of practising for a while the brethren's method of life. Reception into a fraternity, usually accorded only after repeated and urgent solicitation, (for the brethren were above courting proselytes like the mendicant monks), was preceded by a year of probation, during which the novices were subjected to very rigorous treatment.[6] Nor was it thought desirable during this interval for the probationer to return home, lest he might again become entangled with family affairs and worldly connections.[7] The

[1] See a very characteristic instance of this in the life of Lub. Berners, sect. 2. Among his rules of life, Berner has the following, sect. 38: Hoc habe pro regula infallibili: Quicquid placet Domino Florentio et fratribus, hoc vult Deus, ut facias.

[2] Vita Joann. Gronde i. 3.

[3] Vita Arnoldi Schoonhov. sect. 2. Daventr. illustr., p. 35.

[4] Vita Jacobi de Viana, sect. 3.

[5] This is inferred from what is said of several of them, for example of John Binkerink: mansitque cum fratribus in congegatione.

[6] Compare Delprat s 93.

[7] Vita Florent. xxvi. 2.

candidate, on his admission into the Society, was expected to resign his patrimony for the common use. Among the sayings of Florentius we find the following, "Woe to him who, while living in a community, seeks his own things, or says that anything is his own!" Whoever passed the trial, and was still desirous of permanently joining the Society, became a clerk. This state corresponded with that of an ordinary monk, excepting that no vow binding for life was exacted. Any clerk was at liberty to leave the Society without incurring canonical penalties; though he required to settle accounts, with the brethren, and leave behind him a certain sum of money.[1] The freedom in respect of dress and mode of living, was also greater than in monasteries. The customary dress was a grey cloak, coat, and breeches, without ornament. A cowl of the same colour covered the head, whence they were called *cucullati*,[2] pupils had the hair shaved from their crowns. The life of the brethren in every house was very methodical. They had fixed hours for devotional exercises, writing, and manual labour. During meals some book was read, the brethren taking the duty in turn. On such occasions one of them was also appointed to censure the improprieties that might take place at table.[3] In general an equality, like that between the members of a family, prevailed in the Societies, though, for the sake of order, it was requisite that there should be distinct offices. Over every house presided a Rector, Prior or *praepositus*, elected from among the brethren and assisted by a vice-rector. Special charges, in like manner, belonged to the procurator or *œconomus*, to the *Scripturarius* who chiefly attended to the business of copying books, to the librarian, to the *magister novitiorum*, the *infirmarius*, the *hospitiarius*, and then to the several tradesmen. In this respect, however, there were a great many varieties, de-

[1] Delprat s. 93, 94.

[2] On account of this peculiar head-dress, the Canons of the Common Lot were in Germany called Kappen-herrn, Gugel-herrn, Kogel-herrn. There is a representation of the dress and whole appearance of the Brethren, in Helyot Hist. des Ordres Monast. T. ii., p. 339, and Lambinet Origine de l'imprimerie, T. ii., p. 173.

[3] He was called *corrector errorum in mensa*. See Vita Lub. Berneri sect. 16: Dominus Gerhardus Sutphaniæ, qui erat corrector errorum in mensa.

pending upon the magnitude and general arrangement of the particular houses.

About the same time, and under the same form, as the fraternities, the Female Societies of the Common Lot also took their rise.[1] Even in his day, Gerhard had founded in a separate house distinct from the men's, a community of women, who lived a simple and retired life, occupied with manual labour, especially sewing and weaving, devotional exercises, and the instruction of female children. John Binkerink established in the vicinity of Deventer a second convent for women, and presided over the two houses for 26 years. He found only 16 sisters, but he left at his death 150.[2] Like the Beguine-houses of previous times, these Sisterhoods rapidly extended and obtained a regular constitution, not unlike that of those earlier establishments. A directress, called *Martha*, was placed at the head of the house, and had an under Martha as her assistant. The chief-Martha in Utrecht exercised superintendence over all the Societies of the district, and visited them at least once a year. Besides the Martha, whose duty it was to attend to the outward life and its government, a priest was appointed to exercise the spiritual direction. In the houses of the Sisters, the principle of a community of goods seems even from thefirst to have prevailed more decidedly than in those of the Brethren. These Female Societies were in so far of consequence, as being the chief means by which the spirit of the institution was able to penetrate into families. But inasmuch as they present no very peculiar results we at once revert to the Male Societies.

There was a skilful division of *labour* among the brethren. The various trades, necessarily required by the community, were practised by particular persons. Among the laws for the Brother-houses in Wesel—where there were three—there are particular directions for the brother who was tailor, barber, baker, cook, gardener or butler, no less than for the one who was teacher, writer, bookbinder, librarian, or reader.[3] In the establishment at Rostock, the working members were classed into *Laici and Mechanici*.[4] The disparity thus created was, however, equalized in another

[1] See Dumbar Kerk. en Wereldl. Deventer, p. 548—557.

[2] Vita Joh. Binkerink, sect. 4.

[3] Delprat s. 74.

[4] Delprat s. 77.

way. The spiritual and learned brethren participated as far as was practicable in every manual labour, while the labouring brethren in their turn took a share in all that belonged to the clerks; so that the whole still resembled a family, each member helping the other, and all co-operating for the common good. One of the chief points of union was *transcribing books*. The zeal for this employment, originating[1] with Gerhard in a profound religious and intellectual taste, was propagated by Florentius among the whole brethren. Although himself no accomplished writer, Florentius vigorously incited the rest to the practice of the art; and aided the brethren engaged in it by smoothing the parchment, drawing the lines, selecting the passages to be copied, and correcting the manuscripts.[2] To this branch of industry certain hours of every day were allotted, and during some of these they wrote for the benefit of the poor. Those who excelled as penmen, among whom was Thomas à Kempis, executed beautiful manuscripts of the Bible and theological works, which then found a place in the libraries of the brethren; while others employed themselves in copying useful books to be given to indigent scholars, or religious tracts for the common people.

The industry of the brethren, however, depended in a great degree for its direction upon the position and the spirit of the several houses. In many of these the prevailing tendency was towards practical matters; in others it was of a spiritual kind. Some lost themselves completely in commercial pursuits. The difference arose chiefly from the greater or less amount of wealth they possessed, for many houses were very poor, while others were richly and even splendidly provided. The Brother-house at Hildesheim was a sort of spiritual manufactory of mass-books, mass-garments, surplices, and such things.[3] In the convent of St Mary at Beverwijk the brethren traded in parchment, honey, wax, and salt-fish.[4] At Hattem they were poor, and on that account at first practised only agriculture and weaving. They, however, set apart some hours of the day for copying and binding books; and by degrees rose to prosperity, occupied themselves

[1] See above, s. 75.
[2] Vita Flor. xiv. 1, 2. Daventr. illustr. p. 35.
[3] Delprat s. 80.
[4] Ibid. s. 86.

with study, and founded a school which attained to considerable reputation.[1] A similar variety of external position is also observable among the monasteries of the Canons. The celebrated monastery upon Mount St Agnes, of which Thomas à Kempis was an inmate, was, at least at its institution, very poor. Others, again, possessed extraordinary wealth, as, for instance, the New-light at Hoorn, which was styled the Jewel of West Friesland.[2] But among the Canons this diversity of outward position tended not so much to diversify their industry, as rather, according to what happens everywhere and always, to change the opulent monasteries into seats of indolence and luxury.

In the majority of instances, however, the societies of the brethren continued faithful to the spirit of their founders, and to their primitive destination. They occupied that intermediate position between affluence and poverty, which is so favourable to virtue, as it neither compels to stoop to mere manual labour nor yet tempts to embrace a worldly life. Their chief occupation was the religious *training of the common people* and the *education of the young*, and in both of these departments they manifestly formed an epoch, and acted the part of *reformers*.

To the *revival of* religion among the people the brethren contributed by their example, and by the direct impulse which, in various ways, they communicated to those who, from far and near, connected themselves with their establishment[3] wherever these existed. Here we must especially notice one of their rules, which was of no small consequence. The brethren were wont mutually to confess their sins, and assiduously to labour for the improvement of one another. This *voluntary confession of sin* dates its commencement from Gerhard himself, and arose directly from a sense of want. Once, when travelling with his two favourite pupils, John Binkerink and Florentius, Gerhard said to them,[4] "Let us disclose to each other our daily sins."[5] "This incident," says Thomas à Kempis, "gave rise to the salutary custom of telling their faults one to another. Thereafter they mutually

[1] Delprat s. 45, 46.
[2] Ibid. s. 86.
[3] Vita Flor. xv. 2.
[4] Vita Gerh. xii. 2.
[5] Suffragia nostra quotidiana.

admonished each other with all freedom, humbly acknowledged their guilt, asked forgiveness, and thus, improved by love, went to bed." Florentius, in like manner, urgently recommended the practice. "It is of great use,"[1] he says, "to disclose to some brother, worthy of our confidence and experienced in the ways of the Lord, our inward conflicts and perplexities, and not to lean wholly upon our own opinion, but to trust another and take his advice." The practice at first was confined to the brethren themselves. It could scarcely fail, however, to spread imperceptibly,[2] and contribute to the religious improvement of the people. It was natural that the brethren and the laymen who became in any way connected with them, should frequently converse upon the state of their souls, and that confidential communications, disclosures, and admonitions, should be made: And these could not but tend powerfully on the one hand, to excite piety and sharpen the moral sense, and on the other, to force into the background that confession of sin to the priests which the Church compelled, and thus indirectly at least give a blow to one of the most powerful institutions of the hierarchy. Nor was it without effect upon the religious training of the people, that the brethren carefully avoided in their speech the use of oaths. Florentius did not even use strong forms of averment, and at the most only said, *I declare to you once for all*, or *in point of fact*, or some similar expression.[3] Even by this means, they no doubt did much to counteract the grossness and frivolity which prevailed, and it was but of a piece with their other efforts, which were all directed to the great object of promoting prudence, rectitude, and the utmost conscientiousness, not merely in action, but even to the minutest word in speech.

The brethren also laboured incessantly to *enlighten* the people by their *discourses*. These, again, were of a two-fold kind;

[1] Vita Flor. xxiii. 2.

[2] In an old directory for the brethren, given by Delprat s. 162, we read, "The disclosure of our faults to one another is the badge and welfare of the community of the Common Lot." And then, after mentioning the sharp discipline and heavy penances of the monks, it is added, "But we have nothing but a lecture, that is to say, admonition. We ought, therefore, to be very faithful in this duty. Do it away, and our institutions will perish."

[3] Vita Flor. xv. 3.

either sermons, in the proper sense of the term, or so-called *collationes*, collations, which were a sort of spiritual entertainment given over and above the regular meal of the sermon.

On the *method of preaching* Gerhard and his institution exercised a favourable and transforming influence, too visible to be mistaken. Ever since the days of Charlemagne, the priests had been often required to preach to the people in a language they could understand. But these calls had no general effect. The form of their discourses was still that of foreign Latin, and the substance, abstruse scholasticism. Only a few preachers here and there, such as the Dominican, John of Vicenza, (about 1230), and the Franciscan, Berthold of Ratisbonne, (†1272), arose like singular phenomena, and made their discourses practical and level to the comprehension of the people. In this respect, however, the impulse given by *Gerhard Groot* was far more general. In his day, and undoubtedly incited by him, we see in Holland a succession of very distinguished preachers make their appearance. At Utrecht laboured *Wermbold*, confessor to the Sisterhood of St Cecilia, a zealous admirer of Scripture, the familiar friend of Florentius, and, as a preacher, esteemed and extolled by all the people; at Amersford, William *Henrici*, founder of a congregation of clerks; at Zwoll, Henry *Gonde*, confessor to the Beguines; at Haarlem, Hugo *Aurifaber*; at Amsterdam, Giesebert *Dou*; and at Medenblik, a certain brother *Paulus*.[1] All these persons, being mentioned by Thomas à Kempis in connection with Gerhard and Florentius, may be supposed to have also preached in their spirit and style. The fact, however, is certain in regard to the pulpit orators, trained by the brethren themselves; and among whom John *Binkerink*[2] and John *Gronde*[3] are specially mentioned as much-admired preachers. We are, no doubt, destitute of documents to enable us to characterize the peculiar style of their preaching, inasmuch as all we possess from the circle we have designated, is only a Latin discourse, delivered to an ecclesiastical assembly by Gerhard himself, and the sermons of Thomas à Kempis, which are also in the Latin tongue, and with scarce an exception, in-

1 Vita Florent. xxvii. 3.

2 Vita J. Bink. 2.

3 Vita Joh. Gronde ii. 2.

tended for a conventual audience. Partly, however, from these, and partly, too, from other sources of information, we are enabled to draw several inferences. The matter of the discourses consisted, no doubt, of directions how to lead a Christian life or the practical mysticism of the Brethren, comprehending, as we otherwise know that to have done, the radical doctrines of the renunciation of the world, self-denial, and union with God and Christ. The tenets of the Church were introduced, not however, to be scholastically expounded, but practically applied. Thomas à Kempis mentions besides, the themes of two discourses of John Binkerink, which he had himself heard. The one was, "God spared not his only son," the other, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"[1] This preacher was wont to inveigh polemically against the men of the world, and on the other hand, to defend the Christian position of the Brethren. Thus, in one of his sermons, he spake as follows:[2] "There are some who, when they hear the sweet name of Jesus mentioned, derisively cry, What! Jesus, the God of the Beguines! But, O miserable and infatuated men, to use such language. Who, then, is your God? Is it, perhaps, the Devil, whom you call Jesus the God of the Beguines?"

As for the manner of their preaching, it was lively and popular. They spake from an inward impulse, and hence with power and feeling, but without ornament. The chief means they took to enliven their discourses was to illustrate the truth by examples, and confirm it by the sayings of pious and experienced teachers. The former of these methods we find very frequently employed by Thomas à Kempis in his sermons.[3] We may safely suppose, however, that it was previously done by the other preachers of the same circle. But of still greater consequence was the use of the mother tongue. It is true that the surviving discourses of Thomas à Kempis are all in Latin; but then the audience for which these were destined were his own Canons, who had received a scholastic education. There can be no doubt that in their discourses to the people, the Brethren always

[1] Vita Joh. Bink. 2.

[2] Ibid. sect. 3.

[3] He even delivers an opinion upon them in Concio xxviii. de Dominica Palmar. p. 232.

spoke low Dutch. Another feature deserving notice is the length of their sermons. It may be doubted whether or not this is to be considered an excellence. At least, however, it arose from a good ground, which was the powerful zeal of a fresh inspiration, and it proved highly acceptable to the people who had been so long neglected, and were now so eager to hear and learn. While others used to preach only for a quarter of an hour, or even a shorter time,[1] Gerhard sometimes spoke for three whole hours, and John Gronde, in the sermons which he delivered at Zwoll during Lent, occasionally for six, making a short pause, however, in the middle, to refresh himself.[2] The fashion of long sermons, still prevailing in Holland, may readily be explained from this fact. At all events, it may be presumed, that the Brothers who reared so many excellent preachers in their society, exercised no unimportant influence upon the revival and reform of the style of preaching, both in the Netherlands and the north of Germany.

Collations, which were a sort of edifying private addresses, and possessed still more of a popular character, served among the Brethren as a supplement to preaching. They took place first in the Brother-houses. In each of these,[3] upon the afternoon of Sabbaths and saint-days, a *collation* was given. A passage of Scripture, especially from the Gospels, was read, explained, and practically applied, and occasionally, in order to enliven and improve the discourse, questions were addressed by the speaker to the audience.[4] These meetings for religious improvement, in which it was natural to use only the mother-tongue, excited great interest among the people, and were looked upon as of so great utility, that many bequests were made to the Brethren for the express purpose of instituting them on all holidays. For example, Dirk Floriszoon, a priest, about the year 1425, left his house at Gouda, for an establishment to the

[1] See Zerbolt's treatise de utilitate lectionis sacr. lit. in lingua vulgari (Daventr. illustr. p. 45), where we read: Et revera parum discunt vel retinent laici ex hoc, quod in *quindena* vel *minus* audiunt *quandoque* praedicationem, et interdum parum intelligunt.

[2] Vita Joh. Gronde, ii. 3.

[3] Hence sometimes also called a *collation-house*.

[4] Delprat s. 104

Brethren under the condition, that, "upon every holiday they should deliver addresses, suitable, advantageous, and useful to the common man."[1] The Brother-houses also mutually endeavoured to edify each other by such addresses. For this purpose Florentius occasionally visited those in his neighbourhood, or caused it to be done by other persons qualified for the duty.[2] The diligence of the Brethren in this way penetrated, but never intrusively, even into private families. We know, as one case, that John Gronde († 1392), who had a very sonorous voice, attractive to both ear and heart, and whom even Florentius was delighted to hear as one of the best of preachers,[3] would sometimes, when sitting at table in private companies, and on being called upon to do so, address to them an instructive and edifying word.[4]

But by far the most important and beneficial employment of the Brethren continued to be the *instruction of youth.* This was the chief means by which they helped to train up a new generation.[5] Even here however, their labours were of a diversified character. In many localities they had no schools of their own, but entered into free connection with those which already existed, and endeavoured to promote both the spiritual and temporal advancement of the pupils, by presenting them with books, conversing with them on the subjects of religion and learning, and procuring them lodging and the means of earning a livelihood. In other places they set up schools for themselves, and in these gave instruction especially in reading, writing, singing, Latin, (of which they constantly practised the speaking), and religion, but more particularly in Bible history.[6] In some towns again they connected themselves with an existing school in so far as to have several of the classes confided to their particular direction. Such was the case with the celebrated *Institution at Deventer.*[7] This much frequented burgh-school—called by Thomas à Kempis

[1] Delprat s. 53. [2] Vita Flor. xxiii. 1.

[3] Vit. Jo. Gronde ii. 2. [4] Ibid ii. 3.

[5] The good done by the Brethren in this way has been all along specially acknowledged. Thus Andreæ, Bibl. Belg. p. 277, says that Gerhard instituted the Fratres communis vitæ: Qui scholas Latinas juventuti undique ad se confluenti aperirent, et non bonis tantum literis sed et bene vivendi moribus discipulos instruerent.

[6] Delprat s. 96, 98. [7] Ibid. s. 97.

Studium particulare[1]—existed prior to the erections of Gerhard. When these arose, the two institutions entered into free connection with each other. The respective rectors were generally good friends. Many scholars were supported by the Brethren, received board and lodging either from them or, at their recommendation, from other benevolent persons, and took part in the labours and devotional exercises. Several of them also entered into full communion with the Society. During the life of Florentius, John *Boheme* (Böhme) was rector of the school and one of his great admirers, frequently heard him preach, and for the sake of their respected master, shewed much kindness to his protigees.[2] The interest thus taken in them by the Brotherhouses, served in a high degree to promote the prosperity of the schools. Wherever there was such a house, there was sure to be a numerous circle of scholars. Indeed, their numbers in some places became quite enormous; as for example, at Herzogenbusch, the school of the Brothers was often frequented by 1200 youths.[3] The cause lay partly in the fact, that the poor students obtained from the Brethren subsistence and the necessary means of study. For, although the instruction was not in general gratuitous, this advantage was awarded to the

[1] Vita Æmilii Burensis, sect. 2: Daventriæ studium particulare tunc satis viguit.

[2] Vita Florent. xxiv. 2. In the life of John Gronde, Thomas à Kempis, Cap. i. p. 88, relates about himself as follows: Having come to Deventer with the view of pursuing my studies I visited the monastery of Windesem; where my full brother (John à Kempis) was one of the Canons. By his advice, on my return to Deventer, I waited upon Master Florentius, whose fame was already very extensive. He procured for me gratuitous entertainment in the house of an honourable and pious matron, and presented me with books—*benefits which he also conferred upon several other clerks.* Of a piece with this is the following passage in the life of Arnold Schoonhove, sect. i. Cum Daventriensis Ecclesia Reverendi Patris Dom. Florentii floreret praesentia, et multi de diversis partibus scholares Daventriam intrarent propter doctrinae studium, venit illuc de finibus Hollandiæ bonæ naturæ juvenis, Arnoldus nomine . . . præsentavit se obtutibus D. Florentii ad habendum hospitium in domibus devotorum clericorum, quorum non parva multitudo in diversis domibus sub cura et disciplina devotissimi Patris vivebat.

[3] The school at Gröningen also was frequented by extraordinary numbers, especially under Regner Prädinius. See Delprat s. 57.

indigent.[1] Wherever a large number of pupils could be counted upon, it was also possible to engage, and permanently retain the services of, more distinguished teachers. This served to counteract the wandering of learned men from place to place. A stronger bond between the teachers and the taught was formed. The former had it in their power to make a deeper and more enduring impression, while the latter, being better prepared, attained to greater success in the future prosecution of their studies. Besides, a Brother-house operated even upon the entire population of a town in raising the general tone of culture. In this manner, at Amersford, about the middle of the sixteenth century, the knowledge of Latin became so common that the humblest tradesman understood and spoke it; the better educated merchants knew Greek; the girls sang Latin songs, and good Latin might be everywhere heard in the streets.[2] The report may be highly varnished, but it is certain that the schools of the Brethren everywhere laboured to restore the simplicity and purity, and spread the knowledge, of the Latin tongue.[3] It may also be said in their commendation that they evinced a great taste for poetry, and sought to kindle the love of it among their scholars. This, however, had probably less[4] connexion with their Nominalistic views than with their fervent piety and mysticism.

In the *School*, no less than in the Church, the Brothers operated as Reformers. Their keen, unwearied, and disinterested

[1] We see from the passage, in the life of Florentius which we have already quoted, that Thomas à Kempis, when a boy at Deventer, had school-wages to pay, but that the rector gave him back the money on account of his connection with Florentius. In Herzogenbusch, besides the sevenfold distribution into classes, the scholars were also divided into Divites, Mediocres et Pauperes, and it is probable that according to this division they paid either full wages, or half, or none at all. (See Delprat s. 47.) On the gate of the Brother-house in that town (Lindeborn Hist. Episc. Daventr. c. 113) was an inscription concluding with the following words:

Interea gratis docui quos pressit egestas,
Et mercede, quibus sors satis ampla fuit.

[2] Delprat s. 44.

[3] Delprat s. 119 sq.

[4] As Delprat supposes, s. 122.

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zeal for the education of youth, was itself something new. It shewed that they were in earnest to train up an improved generation. There was still more, however, in the method of their instruction. They boldly and at once cast away the whole insipid absurdities of Scholasticism, now become mere lumber, and turned from the perplexing and useless to the sound and needful, from modern barbarism to the simplicity and purity of the ancients. In the foregoing centuries, a philological orthodoxy of the worst sort had sprung up side by side with that in Theology. Indeed the whole depth and subtilty of the speculation of the Schoolmen could not have been expressed in any other than a barbaric form. In the hands of their theologians a sort of Latin had gradually been formed, of which Cicero could only here and there have understood some little wandering word. With this form, however, the system itself was so entwined as necessarily to stand or fall with it. At the same time it was upheld by props which, by long standing, had now become firm. We here speak of the Grammars used in all schools, the *Mammotrectus*, the *Gemma Gemmarum*, and others of the kind, but chief of all the *Doctrinale Alexandri de villa Dei*.[1] These books, no less than the most important article of the Creed, enjoyed the protection of the Church. Any attack upon them was sure to call down upon its author not merely the anger of the schools and their rectors, but the weight of the ecclesiastical arm, as upon a heretic. The delusion, however, was destroyed by the more learned of the Brethren of the Common Lot. They wholly laid aside these useless books, or formally attacked them, put the classics themselves into the hands of the young, and furnished them with better grammars. In this way the *school at Deventer*, and at the head of it, Alexander *Hegius* and John *Sintius*, earned for themselves an imperishable desert.[2] In general, however, the schools of the Brethren cultivated an improved Latin with so much success, and in the sequel advanced with so great zeal to the study of Greek, as to train and send

[1] For an account of it see Fabric. Bibl. med. i. 177. Burkhard de fatis linguae lat. ii. 408.

[2] See particulars in Delprat s. 119 sq.; and respecting Sintius, s. 27 and 109.

forth the most eminent of the revivers of ancient literature at the close of the 15th and the commencement of the 16th century.

We have thus described the nature of the institution, the employments, and the wide-spread influence of the Society of the Common Lot. It now remains to contemplate its progressive development; and here our attention is chiefly called to two new aspects which it presents, and in which its tendency is more fully and distinctly brought to light than has hitherto been the case. From the beginning the Brethren had employed the native language in their endeavours to operate upon the people. *This use of the mother-tongue in religion* was at first more the dictate of instinct than anything else. The reasons of it were now, however, thoroughly discussed, and it was formally laid down as a principle. The consequence was, not only to give to the popular discourses of the Brethren a more secure basis, but to direct their zeal for the transcription of books, in the most effectual of all ways, viz., to the circulation of the Bible and other religious works in the mother-tongue. The importance of this in paving the way for the *Reformation* is self-evident. In order, however, to obtain for the form a completely answerable and strictly defined content, it behoved that the *Doctrine* of the Brethren should be more distinctly and systematically laid down. Consisting originally of practical mysticism, it had been delivered by Gerhard and his immediate successors only in sayings, maxims, and rules of life. Of these a rich traditional treasure had been accumulated among the Brethren. But it was necessary that the materials should once for all be constructed into a whole, in order that in this unity they might become more clear and efficacious. In the way in which the work was effected we cannot but perceive an element of reform. For both of these branches of the Society's development, we have representative personages, for the former, *Gerhard Zerbolt*, one of the Clerks whose labours were mostly devoted to the people; for the latter, *Thomas à Kempis*, one of the Canons who lived a more retired life. The one was of all the Brethren the most zealous copyist and conservator of books, and also the boldest

defender of the use of the mother-tongue in the service of religion. In a still more eminent way, the other was the ablest expounder and most successful propagator of their Christian mysticism. To both of them in succession we shall now direct our attention.

PART THIRD.

THE FURTHER PROGRESS AND FLOURISHING STATE OF THE SOCIETY OF THE COMMON LOT.

CHAPTER FIRST.

GERHARD ZERBOLT AND THE USE OF THE MOTHER-TONGUE IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES.

During the life of Florentius, *Gerhard Zerbolt*, although about seventeen years his junior, attracted notice among the Brethren at Deventer.[1] Having been born about the year 1367 at Zütphen, he is often called *Gerhard of Zütphen*, but must not be confounded with another person of that name, who was professor of Scholastic Theology in the University of Cologne. After visiting several foreign schools, he received the chief part of his education in the flourishing establishment at Deventer, where he soon attached himself closely to Florentius and the Brethren. Even while yet a boy and youth, Gerhard burned with a keen passion for study. He hung upon the lips of his teachers; always imagined the hours of the lesson too short, and deplored nothing so

[1] See Thomas à Kempis' seventh biography of the Brethren: Vita Dom. Gerardi Sutphaniensis. Also Daventria illustr. p. 36 sqq. Dumbar Kerk. en Wereldl. Deventer i. 616. Andreae Bibl. belg. p. 287. Foppens i. 363. Saxi Onomast. t. vii. Fabricii Bibl. med. iii. 127. Delprat s. 140.

much as when they were discontinued.[1] This zeal survived in after life, and under the influence of the Brotherhood of which he became a member, obtained its more determinate direction. Incessantly occupied with reading, studying, and transcribing the Bible and other religious works, he spent the entire day, except the intervals devoted to religious exercises and meals, in his cell, and even in the finest weather scarcely ever approached the window to breathe the fresh air.[2] Outward things were wholly indifferent to him. He seldom noticed the food he ate, and unduly neglected the wants of his body, even when labouring under disease. He was however, far from inexperienced in temporal affairs, possessed great insight and a sound judgment on questions of law, so that Florentius frequently asked his advice and employed his services, in legal transactions.[3]. He had been engaged in a transaction of this kind with the abbot of Dickeninghe, an accomplished canonist, with whom he used frequently to converse, and was on his return to Deventer, when he was seized at Windesem with a deadly faintness. Æmilius van Buren, following the custom of the Brethren, to speak unreservedly to each other, said to him, "It seems to me that your complaint will end in death." To which Gerhard replied, "That is also my opinion." He expired shortly after, on the night of the festival of St Barbara, in 1398, at the age of thirty-one, predeceasing Florentius two years.[4] Immoderate addiction to study and neglect of the body may have brought on his premature death. Florentius and the Brethren lamented over one who had been so dear to them, "as a pillar of the house, and a right hand in matters of business."[5]

Gerhard of Zütphen rendered important services to the Brotherhood in two departments. The one was their book-making; the other, was their labours in reforming the common people, in which he was still more useful.

Gerhard Groot, an ardent lover and collector of good writings, had bequeathed his library to the Brotherhouse at Deventer.[6] Florentius and John de Gronde, whom he had originally appointed

[1] Thom. à K. Vita Gerh. Sutph. sect. 2.
[2] Ibid. sect. 3, 4.
[3] Ibid. sect. 6.
[4] Ibid. sect. 7, 8.
[5] Ibid sect. 8.
[6] Ibid. sect. 15.

curators made important additions to it. But none evinced more zeal or judgment in this respect, than Gerhard Zerbolt, from the time of his appointment as librarian to the institution. He had quite an extraordinary fondness for good books, and used to say, "That they preached and taught far more than we have power to utter."[1] A fine codex was, in his eyes, greatly preferable to a sumptuous feast. Accordingly, he kept transcribers constantly at work, collected books from all quarters, and preserved them with the utmost care. With all his intense zeal as librarian, however, he did not forget that man is not made for books, but books for man, and readily lent his codices even to clergymen not belonging to the society, that they might study and be edified by them.[2] This passion for books might well appear immoderate and hurtful to the more practical among the Brethren; and, hence, when John Cacabus, the pious cook of the fraternity, was asked on his death-bed, by Florentius in what respect he considered the Institution to stand in need of improvement, he said "For one thing we have too many books. We ought to keep only the most needful, sell the rest, and give the money to the poor."[3] The enlightened Florentius, occupying a higher sphere of intelligence, acknowledged that the advice of the brother was well-meant, *but did not follow it.*[4] The industry of the Brethren in copying and collecting books, which had received so strong an impulse from Gerhard Zerbolt, progressed: And certainly, before the invention of printing, the matter was of the very highest importance, partly in a literary respect, as the libraries of the brother-houses now afforded to teachers and youths pursuing their studies, a favourable arena for the exercise of their powers and learned diligence, and partly, too, as regards the improvement of the people, inasmuch as by the Brethren's love of writing, useful books and treatises were circulated among them, and influenced them all the more that they used the mother tongue, which was new in the province of religion.

[1] Vita Ger. Sutph. sect. 5.

[2] Ibid. sect. 5, and Daventr. illustr. p. 36.

[3] Vita Joannis Cacabi, sect. 12.

[4] Dumbar Analect. 1, 36. Delprat. s. 139.

This leads us to the second and more important particular —viz., Zerbolt's labours for the propagation and *use of the Bible* in the mother tongue, and for the use of *the mother tongue* in all religious and ecclesiastical affairs. On both of these subjects, Zerbolt, who was very eloquent,[1] and whom the experience of life had doubtless rendered sensible of their importance, has written treatises, which are remarkable as a sign of the times, and well deserve a full consideration. They show with what intelligence, soundness, and good sense, a man wholly devoted to the Church could express himself on this subject, about 130 years before Luther posted his Theses, and that that Reformer, by his translation of the Bible, only satisfied, with eminent success, a want that was deeply and extensively felt. The sound and liberal views of Zerbolt in this matter ought to raise him the higher in our estimation, by comparison with his contemporaries, and when we consider that Gerson, the most distinguished theologian of the age, looked upon the dissemination of versions of the Bible among the laity as a measure of doubtful expediency,[2] apprehending that it would give rise to mistakes, superficial knowledge, and unseasonable contradiction of the doctrine of the Church, and not reflecting that these disadvantages, which are certainly of possible occurrence, are more than overbalanced by manifold beneficial effects.

The treatise of Gerhard Zerbolt *upon the utility of reading the Bible in the mother tongue*,[3] which, being intended for the learned, is written in Latin, but in Latin of great purity, with sound practical sense, and freedom from all fanaticism, insists on the one hand, that all laymen should instruct and edify themselves out of the Scriptures, and on the other, no less earnestly

[1] Vita Gerh. Sutph. sect. 6 : Clerici libenter collationes ejus audiebant, quia erat vir eloquens et doctus.

[2] *Gerson.* Opp. ed. Du Pin. T. i. Pars i. p. 105, but especially T. iv. P. ii. p. 623. Consider. 5.

[3] Gerhard Zerbolt composed a book, de Libris Teutonicalibus, an excerpt from which, de Utilitate lectionis sacrarum literarum in lingua vulgari, is given in Daventria illustr. p. 41—55, and of that I here state the main points. Zerbolt states fifteen reasons, but I have neither given them all, nor in the sequence in which they are introduced by him. I have selected the most important, and given these in what appeared to me an appropriate order.

warns against religious curiosity, and the unhealthy inclination to dwell by preference upon those parts of Scripture which are dark and mysterious. There is in the Scriptures, he says, a sound and simple doctrine accessible to all, for the comprehension of which no deep search or disputation is necessary, but which, on the contrary, is evident of itself to every reader without great pains or learned controversy. On the other hand, Scripture also contains another doctrine, sublime, profound, and obscure, for understanding which, diligent enquiry and more penetrating research are requisite. The first of these doctrines may be called milk, drink, or water; the second, strong food, or bread. Now, for simple and unlettered people, or laymen, who are in a manner children in knowledge, it is necessary, and in no wise forbidden or disallowed, but rather recommended by holy men, that they should either themselves read, or hear read by others; in the language they understand, those books of Scripture which contain the simple and obvious doctrine. On the contrary, it is not advantageous for such persons to occupy themselves much with those books of Scripture or those holy teachers, which contain the doctrine we have above designated as deep, difficult, and obscure, whether the books are published and translated into the vulgar, or into some other tongue. That the reading of Scripture in the vulgar tongue is not absolutely unlawful for laymen, but rather beneficial and necessary, appears from what follows. "Sacred Scripture does not merely train and instruct a particular class, but every man in his own station For sometimes it prescribes to all men general rules of faith and practice. In other and most places, it addresses its doctrine to some one particular class. Here it teaches beginners, there informs the more advanced, and anon moulds the life of the perfect, thus adapting itself to the moral condition of all. Accordingly, Scripture has been given to all men in all ranks, and given for this end, that they who have as it were become fugitives from themselves, and strangers to their own hearts, and were not able inwardly to discover their sins, might at least learn to discover them outwardly, by means of the picture which the Scripture holds up. What sensible man, then, will dare to say that the laity sin, when they use Scripture for the purpose which God gave it to subserve, viz., teaching them to discover, and heartily to repent and forsake

their sins? Why should they not be partakers of the divine law, as well as of other common blessings of God, seeing that among these the law and the Holy Scriptures, as peculiar in their kind, occupy the chief place? The laity, therefore, cannot with justice be excluded from this benefit and divine consolation, which imparts life and nourishment to the soul." It is in general the grand object of Scripture to give strength and support to the operation of the natural law, in order that man may be enabled, by an outward help, to see and discover what he never could have seen by the darkened or defective light of the law of nature within him. This is the case with all men, but more particularly with laymen, inasmuch as they are perpetually entangled with worldly business and cares, by which their inward eye, or power of discrimination and understanding, which is the law of nature within them, is overspread with dust. Accordingly, for them above all men, it is expedient at certain times to rest from business, enter into themselves, and in the mirror of the divine word, contemplate what they are. The laity are even bound by law at certain times to attend church in order to hear the Word of God. But if they ought not to know the Holy Scripture, why is it preached to them? And why may they not be permitted to read the same things, or almost the same things, as those to which they are called upon to listen? It is too true that laymen learn and retain but little of what they hear, though seldom understand, during the quarter of an hour, or the less time that the sermon lasts. If, without being forbidden, or even blamed, they peruse secular books and poems, frequently most abscene and seductive, and occupy their minds with useless things, such as the Trojan war, the mad Rolando, and the fair Diana, it would be the highest absurdity to restrain them from the Bible, which might kindle in them love to God and a longing for the heavenly country. Besides, the greatest teachers of the Church, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, and Chrysostom, have always exhorted the laity to study the Holy Scriptures, which they would never have done had they considered it injurious or unlawful. And that laymen should read it *in the mother tongue* is involved in the nature of the case. Originally the whole Bible was written in the language, in which it could be best understood by those for whom it was designed, and in general by all;

to wit, the Old Testament in Hebrew for the Jews, the New Testament in Greek, with the exception of the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews, which were in Hebrew, and according to some that also to the Romans, which is said to have been written in Latin.[1] If, then, it be not lawful to read the Bible in the vulgar tongue, why should that have been the tongue in which the prophets and apostles wrote? And why did not Paul and Matthew rather address the Jews in Greek, Latin, or some other language, not familiar to them, and the Greeks in Hebrew? Besides, from the earliest times translations of the Bible have been made into the languages of various countries, either by eminent Fathers of the Church themselves, or at least with their approbation, and especially into the Latin, the use of which extended over the whole world. According to Cassian, the Egyptian monks studied the Bible day and night, and yet they were unaquainted with either Greek or Latin. They must, therefore, have read it in the Egyptian or some cognate tongue. The Jews have the Scriptures in Hebrew, the Chaldeans in Chaldee, the Grecians in Greek, the Arabians in Arabic, the Syrians in Syriac, the Goths in Gothic; the Egyptians, Indians, Russians, Sclavonians, Gauls, in fact all nations, possess the Bible in their own language. If, then, the Bible be read in all languages under the sun, why should it not be read in German, as well as in Arabic and Sclavonian? Reading the Bible can never be unlawful, for otherwise it would either be bad in itself, or must have been positively for-

[1] Zerbolt's critical knowledge must of course be estimated only by the standard of his age. . . . That St Matthew's Gospel was first written in Hebrew has been acknowledged, although not with unanimous consent, by modern criticism itself. In the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews this idea has been rejected upon quite sufficient grounds, and in that of the Epistle to the Romans still more decidedly. The same may also be said of the supposed Latin original of the Gospel of St Mark, of which also Zerbolt subsequently takes notice. The opinion he expresses respecting the relation of the *vulgate* to the *original text* of the Bible is well-deserving of attention. One might almost suppose that in the exercise of prophetical foresight, he had had respect to the fourth session of the Council of Trent, for he says expressly:—"The Holy Scriptures are much more *authentic* in the Hebrew and Greek than in the Latin language. For the Latin version is always to be rectified and improved from the Hebrew and Greek text, when any ambiguity in the language occurs." Daventr. illustr. p. 53.

bidden. But neither of these is the case. Reading the Scriptures cannot be bad in itself, for it is a principal means of aiding a man in doing good, and in overcoming evil. And just as little has it been forbidden, because neither divinity nor law contain any actual prohibition against the practice, but everywhere recommend it. In place, then, of hindering laymen from reading good German books, and the German Bible, they should rather be encouraged to do so; for it would be far more beneficial were they to occupy their time with these, than with useless fables and tales, or with drinking in taverns.

It was to be expected that Zerbolt would express himself in a similar way upon the kindred subject of *prayer in the mother tongue*.[1] Even in those days, and long before the invention of printing, the laity had manuscript prayer-books, which, at certain times, they were accustomed to use; and the question arose whether they should read their prayers and psalms in the mother tongue, or, according to the universal practice of the Church, in Latin. Here, also, Zerbolt, naturally founding upon several declarations of the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiv., decides on the principle, that the intelligible conduces most to edification and profit, and among other observations has the following: "There are in prayer four kinds of attention or application of the mind. First, the superficial, directed to the mere sound of the words, and by which the inward sense receives but little nourishment. Next, attention to the meaning of the words, by which the soul may receive nourishment, provided the prayer is in some degree devotional. Further, there is a spiritual attention, if, from the words of the prayer a spirtual sense is derived; and, in fine, a fourth sort, when a man turns his mind to God, and the object for which he prays. Of these kinds of attention the first may be exercised by the layman, even when he prays in Latin, and so likewise may the fourth, although not with the same certainty. The second and third kinds, however, which are of greatest utility, are excluded in the case of Latin prayers. Accordingly, in all cases, prayer in the mother tongue is the most advantageous."

There can be no doubt that principles such as these, and the

[1] Excerptum alterum de precibus vernaculis. Daventr. illustr. p. 55—58.

example of the Brethren contributed greatly to spread the reading of Scripture among the laity, and to make the use of the mother tongue in the department of religion more universal;[1] and it is scarcely necessary to remark of what consequence this was for the *Reformation*; Luther stands as the historical proof of it. Let us only add a word upon the use of the mother tongue. This exerted an important influence in various directions, on preaching, to which it gave greater life and vigour; on prayer, rendering it more sincere and earnest; and on piety in general, which it increased in affection, depth, and ardour. Like mysticism, it served to give Christianity an inward seat, out of which the Reformation arose. Even objectively, however, the matter was of great consequence. The Reformation was the emancipation of the nationalities from the unity of Rome, in which, during the middle ages, they were entangled. It essentially involved, as we have already seen, a popular element. Nationality cleaves to language, and the acquisition by the countries of Europe of a literature of their own, was the first step toward their deliverance from Rome, which, being Latin itself, strove to Latinize them all. They were become fully ripe for their freedom, when Christianity, and the piety which it inspires, put on the national dress. As soon as the German preached and heard German sermons, read a German Bible, possessed a German theology, and prayed German prayers, the bond which connected him inwardly with Rome was severed; and inward separation could not but soon lead to outward separation also. The vindication of the national independence was completed by Luther, who never could have become the reformer of Germany and Europe, had he not written, and spoken, and sung, and thundered in German. We see, however, by the example before us, and by others which we do not here notice, that the cause of national emancipation in religion had been advancing for centuries before it reached the outbreak in Luther's time, and especially, how large a part in its advancement is due to the Brethren of the Common Lot.

We now turn to a more extensive field of contemplation. All

[1] Comp. Delprat s. 128.

that the Brethren either aimed at or effected, must have had but a small and at least transient influence as causes of the Reformation, had not *their views and doctrines* been intrinsically *reformatory*. The Christian nature of these was, in truth, the point of chief importance. After having existed traditionally, and in a state of dispersion, for almost a century, they were at last collected and systematized, and took a double form, for which the general tendency of the Brethren already supplied the basis, namely, the devotional and the scientific.

CHAPTER SECOND.

THOMAS A KEMPIS. THE BLOSSOM OF THE PRACTICAL MYSTICISM OF THE BRETHREN.

The general tendency of the Brethren of the Common Lot involved a twofold element, devotion and science, the former more important for the Christian people as a whole, the latter for the school and the higher and better educated circles. Both elements might have manifested themselves in combination, but it was also possible that in their development they might in so far separate, as for one greatly to outweigh the other, and this was a necessary result, in order that both should attain their full and culminating perfection. That they actually did, and almost at one and the same time, although, as was natural, with a light precedence of the devotional element, in the two most distinguished men, who, in their inmost being, were born of the spirit which animated the community of the Brethren, viz., in *Thomas à Kempis* and *John Wessel*. In the former we have the blossom of the Christian devotion, in the latter that of the theological science, borne by the tree planted by Gerhard Groot. In spite of their diversities of form, colour, and fragrance, it is at once evident that both blossoms grew upon the same stock,[1] inasmuch as,

[1] The differences, and also the agreements, between Thomas à Kempis and Wessel are shewn even to the minutest point in the following

with all his predominating taste for a life of Christian sentiment, à Kempis does not repudiate science; and neither, on the other hand, with his predominating zeal for science, does Wessel dissociate himself from the foundation of vital Christianity, but rather builds all upon it: while, at the same time, both of them really coincide in important fundamental principles.

A scientific man, accustomed to apply the results of his cogitation to practical life, and supposing him to be truly in earnest about vital Christianity, could not, in the existing state of theology and the Church, escape being a reformer, as we find to be so strikingly the case with Wessel. We will not, however, expect the same thing of a Christian ascetic. Wholly bent upon moulding the inmost spirit of his life, such a character might look away from the circumstances of the world. His object was not, to conquer the world by transforming it, but rather to withdraw himself and as many as possible of a like mind, out of the world, and far away from its pollutions and troubles, to lead a quiet and godly life of love. Under the then existing state of things, such a life necessarily assumed the form of monachism; but it was a monachism of the noblest kind, which, in however narrow and exclusive a way, yet still, with great warmth and sincerity, fostered in itself and others the spirit of genuine and deep Christian piety, and of humble, self-denying, and active charity. This, however, was a spirit which likewise, although indirectly, operated towards the *Reformation*, inasmuch as it vigorously opposed the principle of internalism to the dominant externalisation of the Church. It led the attention from works to dispositions, from visible persons to the invisible and everlasting objects of faith, and converted the outward and legal servitude of the Church into a higher spiritual freedom, conscious of the most entire independence of all the creatures. So that, upon this side, and from it no less than upon that of science, the stand-point of Christian life was introduced which we find occupied by the Reformers, and especially by Luther, who was so richly imbued with the elements of mysticism. In this view we may venture to number even the quiet

treatise: Joh. Guil. Lud. *Scholtz* Dissert., qua Thomae a Kempis sententia de re christiana exponitur et cum Gerardi Magni et Wesseli Gansfortii sententiis comparatur. Groning. 1839.

Thomas à Kempis among the *Theologians who paved the way for the Reformation*, inasmuch as, although a most faithful son of the Church, and as a monk, ever obedient himself, and ever inculcating obedience upon others, he yet, with uncommon success, planted in the Church that sense of inward religion, which, by means of the Reformation, acquired importance in history.

To make à Kempis the spiritual, and yet at the same time the practical Christian man he was, natural disposition, the leadings of Providence, domestic training, the education of the school, and the circumstances of the age, all contributed.

It is evident that his whole being had a natural bent towards the quiet, contemplative, and inward life. Through all his writings there reigns a peculiar spirit, that of existence resting in and satisfied with itself, a quiet throbbing of inward happiness and tranquil content, which diffuses its genial warmth upon every side. We feel that within this circle he is happy—here only, but here wholly, happy. The narrow cell, lighted up by the love of God and Christ, is to him a heaven, which he would be willing to exchange for nothing but the heaven above. Obedience, prayer, all exercises of devotion, are to him a delicious feast. The renunciation of self and active exertions for the brethren are his element. With inward relish and inclination he is himself all that he recommends to others as the task of life. A frame of mind so peculiar, self-actuating, and independent, could not possibly be formed by mere external means. It is not so much a matter of nurture or tuition at school, but chiefly of natural endowment. Thomas was a man of contemplative nature, if ever there was one. Contemplation with him, however, had not a speculative but a thoroughly ethical character. In his case even it partook more of the nature of action than of knowledge. In action it always terminated, but that action far from intruding into the great world, modestly retired into the humblest circles.

The circumstances of life, as a brief review will show, were also well adapted for training this nature in all its simple purity.

Thomas Hamerken (Malleolus[1]) was born in the year 1380, at

[1] Particulars respecting the life of Thomas are to be found in Daventria illustr. p. 60—62, but especially in the two biographies in

Kempen[1] or Kampen, a small but pleasant town situate in the great plain of the Rhine, not far from Cologne; and for that reason, according to the custom of the times, he is generally called Thomas à *Kempis*. His parents were honest citizens,[2] of limited fortune. Far from being ashamed of his humble origin, it rather disposed him from early youth to modesty.[3] Like Luther, in lowliness of mind, he rejoiced in his humble rank, never aimed at high things, and shunned rather than courted intercourse with the great. His father, a mechanic, earning his daily bread in the sweat of his brow, gave him an example of industry, diligence, simplicity, and perseverance.[4] His mother was distinguished for piety,[5] and planted at an early age in his susceptible heart the seeds of a vital and prevailing love for divine things. Even in tender youth Thomas must have evinced fine talents. It would otherwise scarcely have entered the minds of his parents to make him a scholar; for, as they were very poor, the boy would have to be wholly thrown upon the liberality of others. To young persons in such circumstances, the institutions of the Brethren of the Common Lot at this period offered a helping hand, providing them with the means of subsistence, instruction, and religious train-

Henry Sommalius' edition of his works, the first from the pen of Jodocus Badius Ascensius († 1535; see Delprat s. 52, and the passages there cited), the second from that of a later successor of Thomas in the subpriorate of the convent upon Mount St Agnes, by name Franciscus Tolensis. Compare besides Trithemius de Scriptorib. eccl. cap. 707, p. 164. Andreae Bibl. belg. p. 836. Foppens Bibl. belg. ii. 1135. Fabricii Bibl. med. iv. 215—19. Schröeckh Kirchengesch. xxxiv. 302. Erhard Gesch. des Wiederaufblühens i. 263. Schwarz Gesch. der Erziehung 2te Aufl. ii. 244. Delprat ueber die Stiftungen Groots an verschiedenen Stellen, s. 13, 34, 84, 103, 126. Beil. vi. Gieseler Kirchengesch. ii. 4, s. 347.

[1] Opidulo in agro et dioecesi Coloniensi, says Andreae Bibl. belg. p. 836. Franc. Tolensis Vit. Tom. §. 1: Quod esse Menapiorum ignobile oppidulum dicitur.

[2] Parentibus mediocris fortunae, matre humili genere, patre vero opifice, says George Pirkhaimer, prior of the Carthusians at Nürnberg, in a letter, dated 1494, and prefixed to the edition of à Kempis' works by Sommalius. To the same purport speak Jod. Badius Vit. Thom. c. 5, and Franc. Tolensis Vit. Thom. §. 2.

[3] Jod. Badius Vita Thom. c. 6.

[4] Ibid. c. 5.

[5] Ibid: Pientissimae Matris exhortationibus religionis imbibit amorem.

ing, and offering the prospect of useful occupation and permanent support. Accordingly, at the age of thirteen, Thomas set out for Deventer, where the most celebrated establishment of the kind then flourished.[1] The grammar school of this town, although really an independent institution, was connected in various ways with the Brother-house of the place. The Brethren had the charge of part of the instruction, and zealously contributed to the maintenance and advancement of the scholars, especially the poorer among them. Thomas does not appear at the first to have had any connection with the Brother-house,[2] but after some time he paid a visit to his brother John, then Canon of the monastery of Windesheim, which was in connection with the Society of the Common Lot, and was by him recommended to Florentius, its much revered superintendent.[3] Florentius won the heart of the youth by kindness, as much as he imposed upon him respect by his venerable manners. He furnished him with books which he was too poor to purchase, and procured for him lodging in the house of a pious matron,[4] just as happened to Luther in Eisenach. There were also other indirect advantages which he derived from his acquaintance with so influential a person, and of which he has himself related the following example.[5] The then Rector of the school at Deventer, John Boehme,[6] who, according to Thomas' account, exercised rigid discipline, was an intimate friend of Florentius. The boy, having one day gone to him to pay his school fees, and redeem the book which he had in the meanwhile placed in pawn, was asked by the Rector, "Who gave you the money?" On hearing that it was Florentius, Boehme dismissed the scholar with the words, "Go, take it back to him: for his sake I shall

[1] The fame of Florentius and the Institutions at Deventer had already extended ad partes superiores. Vit. Joh. Gronde. i. 2.

[2] In the Vita Thom. by Franc. Tolensis, §. 4., it is expressly said: *Paulatim* irrepsit in illustrium pietate et probitate virorum familiaritatem. It seems to be there also presumed, what however is manifestly incorrect, that Thomas was then personally acquainted with Gerhard Groot.

[3] Vita Joh. Gronde, i. 2.

[4] Ibid: Demum hospitium cum quadum honesta et devota matrona gratis impetravit, quae mihi et aliis multis Clericis saepius benefecit.

[5] Vita Flor. xxiv. 2.

[6] Thomas writes Boheme or Boëme.

charge you nothing." Ere long Thomas also took part in the devotional exercises of the Brethren, and was wholly drawn into their pious mode of life, which filled him with admiration. Men such as they were, living in the world and yet appearing to have nothing wordly about them, he had never before seen. Following the bent of his inmost being, and with entire affection, he attached himself to them, and before long entered into full outward communion with the Society. He obtained from Florentius a place in the Brother-house, in which at the time about twenty clerical and three lay members, a procurator, cook, and tailor, dwelt together, and received maintenance.[1] His chief companion, and soon his most intimate friend, was *Arnold of Schoonhoven* (Schoenhofen), a youth of fervent piety, with whom he shared a little chamber and bed. Here Thomas exercised himself in copying and reading the Holy Scriptures, and unremittingly took part in the devotional exercises of the Brethren. What he earned by writing he put into the common fund, and when it fell below what was needful for his support, the lack was supplied by the generosity of Florentius.[2] The example of his young friend Arnold's glowing piety, especially made a deep impression upon his mind. Arnold used to rise every morning at four, the moment the clock struck the hour, and after uttering a short prayer upon his knees by his bed side, quickly dressed himself and hastened to the worship. At all devotional exercises he was the first to come and the last to depart.[3] Besides, he frequently withdrew to some solitary place in order to devote himself unobserved to prayer and meditation. Thomas sometimes accidentally became the witness of these outpourings of his friend's heart, and says, "I found myself on such occasions kindled by his zeal to prayer, and wished to experience, were it but sometimes, a grace of devotion like that which he seemed almost daily to possess. Nor was his fervour in prayer at all wonderful, considering that wheresoever he went or staid, he was most diligent in keeping his heart and mouth."[4] One of the things which Arnold of Schoenhofen desired, was to learn quickly

[1] Vita Arnoldi Schoonhoviensis §. 2, 3.
[2] Ibid. §. 3.
[3] Ibid. §. 4.
[4] Ibid. §. 5.

and well the art of writing, which was so highly valued and so usefully applied by the Brethren. He disclosed this wish to his friend, who thought within himself, "Ah, willingly would I also learn to write, did I but first know how to make myself better!" "But," as Thomas observes respecting his companion, "he obtained a special grace from God which made him skilful in every good work, so that he never felt it hard to obey."[1] It is evident from these disclosures that Thomas, in his own estimation, fell far short of his friend, and that, in comparison with him, he was not satisfied with his zeal in devotion. This is likewise evinced by a dream which he is reported to have had about this time. The Virgin Mary appeared to him, and while she lavished caresses upon the scholars around, looked sternly and severely at him for being remiss in his devotion and prayers to her.[2]

While Arnold of Schoenhofen afforded Thomas a youthful pattern of piety, studious zeal, and that exact obedience which the Brethren so urgently inculcated, side by side with it he had a still higher and more finished model in Father Florentius himself. The apostolical simple-mindedness and dignity, the urbanity, gentleness, and self-sacrificing activity for the common weal which characterized this person, inspired Thomas with a boundless admiration. Of this in his life of Florentius, itself the noblest monument of affectionate reverence for the departed, he relates many characteristic and affecting traits. Before he had as yet become a boarder with the Brethren, his teacher John Boehme, who was always a rigid disciplinarian, and exercised a strict government over the boys, even in the church, had ordered him with some others to attend in the choir. Here Florentius also was present. "Now, whenever," as Thomas proceeds to relate,[3] "I saw my good Master Florentius standing in the choir, even although he did not look about, I was so awed in his presence by his venerable aspect, that I never dared to speak a word. On one occasion I stood close beside him, and he turned to me, and sang from the same book. He even put his hand upon my shoulder, and then I stood

[1] Ibid. §. 7.

[2] The narrative is to be found in the Speculum Exemplorum Dist. x. §. 7, and is inserted between the two Biographies in the Sommal. Edition.

[3] Vita Florent. xi. 2. 3.

as if rooted to the spot, afraid even to stir, so amazed was I at the honour done me." Thomas, in the course of time, came to dwell in Florentius' house, and closer acquaintance did not diminish his reverence, but strengthened his love. When he happened to be troubled in his mind, he applied, like the other youths on similar occasions, to his respected master, and such was the effect of even a sight of his placid and cheerful countenance, or at least of a few words of conversation, that he never failed to leave his presence comforted and encouraged.[1] The attachment of the youth towards his spiritual father extended to the minutest points. In consequence of weakly health, Florentius sometimes could not partake of the common meals. On such occasions, he ate at a small and cleanly covered table in the kitchen, and Thomas considered it an honour to attend and serve him. "Unworthy though I was," he says, "I often, at his invitation, prepared the table, brought from the dining-room what little he required, and served him with cheerfulness and joy."[2] If Florentius was at any time worse than usual, it was customary to call upon the brethren in the neighbouring houses to remember him in prayer. On these occasions, Thomas often undertook to carry the message, and delighted to be so employed.[3] His veneration for Florentius, however, was principally evinced by the pains he took deeply to engrave on his mind the sayings and conduct of his master, imbibe the entire image of his life, and express the spirit of it in his own actions and thoughts no less than in his writings.

Thomas says[4] that, Examples are more instructive than words. This was the case with himself. He had a boding mind, and was animated by that piety which always presumes the best of others, fondly looks up to some higher character, and endeavours to raise itself by imitation to the same level. Such was the effect produced upon him by the Brethren's whole manner of life,

[1] Vita Flor. xv. 3, Thomas' sense of gratitude towards Florentius could never be effaced. See Prolog. ad vit. Flor. sect. 4 : Qui (Florentius) mihi et multis aliis benefecit in vita, et primo traxit ad Dei servitium— Vit. Flor. xvi. 4.

[2] Ibid. xiii. 2.

[3] Ibid. xviii. 2.

[4] Vall. lilior. xxiv. 1, p. 95.

which appeared to him in the fairest light, by Arnold of Schoenhofen, and particularly by Florentius. Even little incidents that occurred made an impression of the same kind. In the biography of Henry Brune,[1] he relates as follows. "One day, in winter, Henry was sitting by the fire-side, warming his hands, but with his face turned towards the wall, for he was at the time engaged in secret prayer. When I saw this, I was greatly edified, and from that day loved him all the more." The picture in the fancy of the youth may in such cases have risen above its object. But it had a quickening and improving effect upon himself, and that was of most importance.

Florentius, who on his part no less treated[2] Thomas like a beloved son, appears also to have mainly determined his outward course of life. The youth had now passed seven years in the zealous exercise of piety and the prosecution of his studies, at the school and Brother-house of Deventer, which had been to him an actual paradise,[3] when one day, being a high festival, Florentius, noticing in him a more than ordinary liveliness in the worship, called him at the close of the service, and addressed him somewhat as follows:[4] "My most beloved son, Thomas, the period has now arrived when you must decide upon a vocation in life. You are standing at the Pythagorean point where the two roads separate. You see what distresses and dangers abound in the world; and how even its joys are transitory, and accompanied with repentance. You know we must all die, and render an account of our life to God and Christ. Woe to them who cannot do it with a good conscience! What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Be anxious then about your salvation. There is, however, as you have often heard, a twofold way of attaining to it, the active and the contemplative. The one is trodden by those who, by good works, make themselves worthy of Christ; the other, and the more acceptable to God, by those who, with Mary, set themselves at the feet of Jesus. Whichsoever of the two you may prefer, you will walk it better and more safely in the convent, than in

[1] Vall. lilior. xxiv. Sect. 2.
[2] Francisc. Tolensis Vita Thom. §. 7.
[3] Vita Flor. xxi. 1.
[4] Jod. *Badius* in Vita Thom. c. xi.

the world which lieth in wickedness. Do not believe that the inmates of the cloister are idlers. In their prayers, devotional exercises, and manual labours, they have an excellent occupation, and may earn the reward of the active life. And as little believe that you have nothing to offer to God. You have yourself, your body, your will. Present these to Him; and you will reap in return, eternal life. I know, too, that you are not insensible to what your Creator and Saviour has done for you, for I have often observed in you symptoms of true piety. If, then, you ask of me what religious Order I would recommend, I am of opinion that, for persons who have been educated in our schools, the most eligible is that instituted by our venerable Father, Gerhard Groot,—I mean that of the Canons according to the rule of St Augustine, for which, as you are aware, we have lately erected two colleges." This address of the much revered master decided the mind of the youth. He answered, stammering with emotion: "Father, you open to me the prospect of what I have long desired. I have a brother in Windesheim. Please, therefore, be so good as to procure for me a place among my dear school-fellows upon Mount St Agnes." Next day Florentius gave Thomas a letter of recommendation[1] to the Prior of this convent.

The convent of St Agnes stood in a pleasant and healthy situation, at no great distance from the town of Zwoll, and upon an upland, the foot of which was watered by the Vechte, a stream abounding in fish.[2] Recently erected, with very slender means, it was as yet but little known and esteemed.[3] This, however, was far from discouraging Thomas; for he was very kindly received, and the place had all the attractions of a refuge prepared for him by God.[4] From that day he passed in it the whole of his life, and by his means the obscure monastery has acquired a reputation in history.

[1] Jod. Badius Vit. Thom. c. xii.

[2] Francisc. Tolensis in vita Thom. §. 7.

[3] Sermon. ad Novit. Pars iii., serm. 1. Ex. 1. Monasterium nostrum, quod tunc temporis in magna paupertate inceptum, paucis cognitum fuit. Vita Joh. Gronde ii. 4: Fratres S. Agnetis, qui adhuc pauperes erant et sine sacerdote. Sermon. ad Novit. iii. 1, p. 73.

[4] Francisc. Tolensis Vita Thom. §. 7.

Strongly as the mind of Thomas was bent upon his vocation, and although both nature and previous education had perfectly adapted him for it, he did not plunge into it without consideration. Deliberate even in his youthful zeal, he spent five years of a novitiate, assumed the monastic dress in the sixth, and did not until the year following take the vow,[1] which he then, however, kept with inviolable fidelity. As he was now a priest,[2] besides the common and special devotional exercises, his chief occupation in the monastery consisted in delivering religious discourses and the duties of the confessional. He also, however, employed himself in the composition of works and treatises, and in transcribing those of others. Like a worthy disciple of the Brotherhood, he practised the copying of books with the utmost care and diligence,[3] and had here the advantage of a quick eye and skilful hand. He took a child-like delight in well-written books, and was of opinion that what is good and holy, ought to be ornamented and honoured in this manner.[4] The monastery of St Agnes preserved an admirable transcript of the Bible in four volumes, executed by him, a great Mass-book, and several works of St Bernard. He also repeatedly transcribed his own work on the Imitation of Jesus Christ.[5] Nor did Thomas even withdraw himself from the direction of the affairs of the monastery; for he was a great economist of time, and, to the neglect of his health, busied himself from the earliest hour in the morning.[6] He first held the

[1] Andreae Bibl. belg. p. 836: Probatus per quinque annos, sexto demum anno sacrum habitum induit, ac Religionem anno septimo professus est. Jod. Badius cap. xii. Francisc. Tolensis §. 8.

[2] . . . . ut qui officium sacerdotale suscepimus. De Imit. Chr. iv. 11, 8.

[3] The value he set upon it appears from the Concio viges. de scriptura Jesu p. 197 and 198. Doctrinale Juven. cap. 4. Vita Flor. in the Verb. notabil. Dom. Flor. §. 7.

[4] Vita Gerh. xiii. 2.

[5] Francisc. Tolensis Vita Thomae §. 9, 10.

[6] He himself says, De Imit. Chr. i. 19, 4. Nunquam sis ex toto otiosus: sed aut legens, aut scribens, aut orans, aut meditans, aut aliquid utilitatis pro communi laborans; and testimony on the same point is borne in his favour by Andreae Bibl. belg. 837: *Nunquam otiosus*, semper vel lectitabat aliquid, vel in communem usum scribebat, vel pro instructione Fratrum commentabatur. Franc. Tolensis §. 9: Otio, ut rei pestilentissimae, nunquam indulsit.

office of sub-prior,[1] and before he was far advanced in life, that of procurator or steward. But as the outward duties, connected with this employment, appeared to abstract him too much from meditation and his more profitable labours as an author, he was reponed in the sub-priorate,[2] and held the situation until his decease.

From the nature of the case, we have little to say of Thomas' cloisteral life. Without any considerable disturbance, it flowed on like a limpid brook, reflecting on its calm surface the unclouded heavens. Quiet industry, lonely contemplation, and secret prayer, filled up the day, and every day was like another. Of the instances with which he was accustomed to enliven his discourses, many seem to have been borrowed from his own experience; but, as he always speaks in the third person, these are hardly distinguishable from the rest, and furnish little that is characteristic. I shall adduce but two particulars, of which the first is as follows:[3] A pious brother of the house had to officiate at mass. Before performing the duty, he visited another who lay dangerously ill, and was entreated by him to offer in the service a prayer for his recovery. The brother complied with the request. At the conclusion of mass, the patient felt himself relieved, and in a few days was restored to health; and so strong an impression did the circumstance make upon his mind, that from that time he became more and more zealous in his devotions and pious studies, and after some years rose to the dignity of prior. In this instance, Thomas may have been either the one or the other of the two parties. The second incident has, from the earliest times, been supposed to have occurred to Thomas himself:[4] One of the brethren had lost in his cell a book upon which he placed a particular value. After having long sought for it in vain, he at last addressed himself by prayer to the

[1] Only one of the priors of the monastery during Thomas' connection with it, being the third since its institution, is mentioned by him. He was called Theodoricus Clivis, and is designated as devotus et praedilectus Pater noster. Sermon. ad Novit. iii. 8. Ex. 6.

[2] Franc. Tolensis Vit. Thom. §. 9.

[3] Sermon. ad Novit. iii. 11. Ex. 1.

[4] Sermon. ad Novit. iii. 2. Ex. 1. Comp. the conclusion of Franc. Tolensis Vita Thomae.

Virgin Mary, and several times repeated the Salutation of the angel; whereupon, while sitting upon his bed opposite the Virgin's picture it seemed to enter his mind, like an inspiration, Search below the straw of the bed! He obeyed, found the lost treasure, and was thereby greatly encouraged in the worship of Mary. Both narratives present to us a peculiar feature in the piety of Thomas, connected with the state of education at the time, and of which many instances might be adduced. We allude to credulity for the marvellous, and, what is partly connected with it, zeal for the worship of the saints. In both respects, but particularly in the adoration of Mary and St Agnes, the pious brother goes great lengths, and occasionally falls into the playful.[1] Even here, however, all he says has ever an amiable, ingenuous, and thoroughly moral character, and he is far from allowing these things to displace the essentials of true piety.

Thomas, by moderating the rigour of mortification, and by a well-regulated activity, reached a very advanced stage of life. He died in July 1471, at the age of from 91 to 92.[2] Respect-

[1] Compare Sermon. ad Novit. P. iii. Serm. iv—vi. Serm. vii—ix., particularly the Exempla appended to Serm. viii. See the same matter abbreviated: de Disciplina Claustral. cap. xiv., where we read: Quicquid habere desideras, per manus beatae Mariae humiliter roga. Mariolatry is brought forward as a characteristic of Thomas by Trithemius, who designates him as beatae Mariae semper virginis amator praecipuus. De script. eccl. c. 707. p. 164. So likewise Specul. Exemplar. Dist. x. §. 7.

[2] Such must have been his age, if, according to the dates assigned by all, his death took place about the end of July (octavo Calendas Augusti) 1471, and he was born in 1380. This is also the opinion of the early writers, one of whom, Jodocus Badius xii. 5, calls him a man of ninety, and the other Franciscus Tolensis §. 8, a man of ninety-two. Of this period he passed no less than seventy-one years on Mount St Agnes, six of a novitiate, and sixty-five as an actual Canon. Previous to which he had lived seven years in the house of Florentius. According to this computation he could not have been, as Jodocus Badius supposes, twelve, but thirteen or fourteen years of age on his arrival at Deventer, unless we suppose, what is less probable, that he spent two years there before his admission into the Brother-house. Accordingly, the dates in the life of Thomas may, with the greatest likelihood, be stated as follows: He arrived in his thirteenth year at Deventer, and was in the year following admitted into the house of Florentius. Here he remained seven years, and then, when between

ing the last years of his life tradition has preserved no particular account.[1]

In his work upon Spiritual exercises,[2] Thomas exhorts the monk "to shew forth in his whole walk, modesty and pious cheerfulness," and in another passage[3] depicts the man of God as "of a cheerful countenance, calm and pleasant in his discourse, prudent and regular in all his actions, and ever shedding around him peace and blessing." It seems as if by these traits he had depicted himself. All who were acquainted with him have borne witness how, during the whole course of his life, he evinced love to God and love to man, cheerfully bearing all afflictions, and kindly excusing the faults and foibles of his brethren. In his whole nature and habits,[4] he was cleanly, moderate, chaste, inwardly happy, and outwardly cheerful. His utmost endeavour was to maintain a uniform tranquillity and complete peace of mind. With this view, he did not willingly entangle himself with the business of the world, avoided intercourse with the great and honourable,[5] observed a marked silence when the conversation turned on temporal things,[6] and was ever fond of solitude and meditation. At the same time, he was any thing but stupid. From early youth he had a very lively sense of friendship,[7] for which, it is true, he found no solid or lasting basis except in a mutual love of divine things.[8] He was full of zeal and activity in promoting the welfare of his community, and espe-

twenty and twenty-one, went to Mount St Agnes, where he lived six years as a novice, and sixty-five as a Canon, consequently the whole period betwixt his 26th and 91st, or 27th and 92d year.

[1] Respecting the exhumation of his bones, which took place about the year 1672, and their re-interment at Zwoll, see Foppens Bibl. belg. ii. 1138.

[2] Exercit. spirit. v. 4.

[3] De fideli Dispensatore iii. 9.

[4] These traits are borrowed in part from his own writings, but mainly from Francisci Tolensis Vita Thom. §. 9. sqq.

[5] He also warns others of its danger, Sermon. ad Novit. ii. p. 30. Vita Flor. xxv. 1. Notabil. verba Flor. §. 3 and 9.

[6] Francisc. Tolensis §. 11.

[7] Vita Arnoldi Schoonh., particularly §. 5. Vita Luberti Berneri §. 5.

[8] De Recognit. propr. fragilit. c. 3. §. 1: Esto bonus et fidelis, et invenies amicum fidelem; amor Dei amicum fidelem constituit: *sine Deo nulla amicitia stabit.* In the same strain de Imit. Chr. iii. 62, 1.

cially in whatever tended to enliven or adorn the divine worship; and in his own favourite province, when God and divine things were the subject of conversation, he was an eloquent and inexhaustible speaker. Multitudes from remote places flocked to hear him.[1] And whenever he was solicited, he was always ready to deliver a discourse, only taking a short time for meditation or sleep.[2] He also gave regular addresses with great care and faithfulness. We still possess a series of *Sermones* and *Collationes*[3] from his hand, for the special use of novices, which, in clear and flowing diction, and with rich applications to life, impressively propound the doctrine of his practical and devotional mysticism.

In devout exercises, public and private, Thomas was unwearied. Like the friend of his youth, Arnold of Schoenhofen, he was all his life the earliest at the commencement, and the last at the close, of divine service. During the singing of the Psalms,[4] he stood in an erect posture, never studying his ease by leaning or supporting his body; his look was often raised heavenward; his countenance, in a manner, shone, and his whole frame involuntarily followed the direction of his soul.[5] To a person who, making use of a pun current among the monks, observed to him that he seemed as fond of the Psalms as if they were salmon, he replied, "It is a fact, but my disgust is also excited, when I see men not duly attentive to them."[6] It must be mentioned as part of his private discipline, that on certain days of the week, while singing the hymn *Stetit Jesus*, he used the scourge.[7]

[1] . . . . Adeo, ut plurimos sui visendi et audiendi causa ad se attraheret. Andreae Bibl. belg. 836. Franc. Tolensis Vita Thom. §. 10.

[2] Francisc. Tolensis Vita Th. §. 10.

[3] Sermones ad Novitios, and ad Fratres, as well as Conciones, mostly designed for Church Festivals, and forming the first division of his works. In the prologue to the former it is said: Sermones quos per modum dulcis *collationis* pro Novitiis nostris, diversis quidem temporibus, in unum collegi, &c.

[4] Thomas repeatedly expresses his strong taste for sacred music; and does so in a peculiarly characteristic manner in the Sermon. ad Novit. P. 1. Serm. 6. Exempl. 3, where probably he is himself one of the parties.

[5] Francisc. Tolensis Vit. Thom. §. 11.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid. §. 12.

Thomas's outward appearance corresponded to the gentleness of his inward nature.[1] He was below the middle size, but well-proportioned. The colour of his face was fresh, with a slight tinge of brown. His eyes were piercingly bright, and, in spite of incessant use, retained their acuteness of vision to extreme old age, so that he never used spectacles. Franciscus Tolensis was once shewn a picture of him even then much effaced, but with the characteristic motto at the foot, "I have sought rest everywhere and found it nowhere, save in solitude and books."[2]

These things taken conjunctly, exhibit a man, who undoubtedly cultivated and displayed only one aspect of human nature and life. That aspect, however, has also its rights, and was displayed by Thomas in a way which entitles him to be considered its perfect type and finished model. The unity of his character was the more complete, that, as a whole, it was undisturbed, inasmuch as, from early youth, he had pursued essentially the same course. Thomas paid no attention to the world. He valued science only in as far as it subserved religious purposes. He was no scholar in the proper sense of the term, and did not even aspire to be an orator. All he did and endeavoured had, as its single and exclusive drift, to cherish the one thing needful in his own heart, and to train others in Apostolical simplicity for the same object. Compared with this, he disregarded all other things. The love of God, and reared on that foundation, peace of mind and the calm happiness of unbroken fellowship with Him, was the ultimate and exclusive object of all his efforts. And this object he attained as few else have done. His own being was wholly imbued with the love of God and Christ, and pervaded by calmness and peace; and of this love and peace he has been, not only the most impressive preacher, but, I might say, the attractive magnet to countless multitudes. This leads us to his writings and their contents.

If called upon to state the *thoughts*, *principles*, and *maxims*, upon which the life of Thomas was based, the question is not so

[1] Francisc. Tolensis Vit. Thom., §. 9.

[2] Ibid. sect. 12. The motto at the foot was in the words: In omnibus requiem quaesivi, sed non inveni, nisi in Hoexkens ende Boexkens: hoc est, in abditis recessibus et libellulis.

much of a system of doctrine, properly so called, as of a theory of religion and morality. It is true that with him, in common with all eminent men, a few governing thoughts constitute the kernel of his intellectual being, and that, impelled by the ardour of his love, he never tires propounding and enforcing them in ever-fresh, although but slightly varied, forms. But then his thoughts do not appear as abstract notions, far less as a complete body of these, but are presented as maxims, in a gush of devotional oratory, sometimes bordering on the poetical. In a word, what we find in him is practical wisdom in proverbs, which, however, is sustained by a determinate general tendency of life and Spirit. In this mental tendency, if analyzed into its constituent parts, and duly estimated, we must distinguish two elements: the one essential, universal, and of enduring importance, the other more formal, pertaining to the particular age, and of transitory nature; the one is Christianity, the other Monachism. It is true that, even in Thomas's case, these elements are not separate and disjoined, but throughout fused into each other by the common medium of practical Mysticism. Christianity with him is imbued with Monachism, although more so in some points and less in others, and, as must be allowed, is thereby troubled and narrowed, but Monachism is always animated and refined by Christianity. Still, sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, preponderates, and it is possible, without violently dissevering, to contemplate them apart.

The *works of Thomas*,[1] which shew, not indeed the absence of general Christianity, but yet the predominance of Monachism, are his Sermons to Novices, and his Discourses to Conventual Brethren in general, his *Disciplina Claustralium*, and *Dialogus Novitiorum*, together with several smaller pieces, particularly letters and poems. In this class we must also reckon the Biographies of the most eminent of the Brethren of the Common Lot, in which he exhibits the ideals of the ascetic life.[2] The

[1] I here use the edition of Thomas' Opera omnia by the Jesuit Sommalius, Cologne. 1728. 4.

[2] Thomas has written at large biographies of Gerhard and Florentius, and more briefly those of Florentius' most eminent disciples, John Gronde, John Binkerink, Lubert Berner, Henry Brune, Gerhard Zerbolt, Æmilius van Buren, Jacob von Viana, Arnold Schoonhoven, and John Cacabus, the pious cook in the house of Florentius. These biographies are in Sommalius' edition of 1560, in the 3d part, s. 3—

works in which, on the contrary, monasticism is not wanting, but where general Christian mysticism forms the principal ingredient, are, the Imitation of Jesus Christ,[1] the Soliloquy of the Soul, the Garden of Roses, the Valley of Lilies, the tract *De tribus tabernaculis*, and some minor treatises. Among these the book on the Imitation of Jesus Christ, standing—as no one doubts, and as even its effects have demonstrated it to do,—in point of excellence far above all the rest, is the purest and most finished production of Thomas, and next to it, although in a much lower degree, we would place the Garden of Roses, which is even more sententious and apothegmatic in its style. In the first-mentioned writings, and consistently with their predominant monastic stand-point, the doctrine of works and their meritoriousness occupies a most important place.[2] In those last mentioned, especially the Imitation of Christ, that doctrine almost wholly disappears, and, excepting in a few allusions,[3] all is traced back to Divine grace. We may conclude from this, what is proved by their higher excellence in other respects, that these productions belong to the later period of Thomas' life.

142; and in that of 1728 in the last part, s. 1—113, and are succeeded by the life of the saint Lidwina or Lidwigis. In Florentius and his disciples Thomas pourtrays men whom he intimately knew; and hence his representations, although imperfect in respect of language (he says himself that he describes them *barbarizando*), are in a high degree natural and vivid, and owing to his love for the subjects, have a childlike affectionateness. We fancy we are beholding pictures from the Dutch school of that age. The abundance of individual traits makes the life of Florentius the most attractive of them all. The reader will have observed how largely we have hitherto drawn our materials from these sources. They are the most important fund of knowledge respecting the inward life of the community of the Brethren.

[1] I entertain no doubt that this work proceeds from Thomas, and no one else.

[2] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 7, p. 20. Ibid. p. 21. Serm. 8, p. 21. Also P. ii. Serm. i. p. 28. Serm. ii. p. 31. De discip. Claustral. vii. 2, p. 141. Enchirid. Monachor. c. 10. p. 252.

[3] E.g. Dolor *satisfactorius* i. 24, 1. Then: Non enim stat *meritum* nostrum in multis suavitatibus, sed etc. ii. 12, 14. Again: O semper optandum servitium, quo summum *promeretur* bonum. iii. 10, 5. Further: Vita facta est per gratiam *meritoria*, iii. 18, 2, and iii. 19, 3: Nihil apud Deum, quantumlibet parvum, pro Deo tamen passum, poterit *sine merito* transire.

Thomas' whole theory[1] cannot in respect of the thoughts be properly called original. Mystical theology is based essentially upon experience, principally the mystic's own, but likewise also that of others. In the latter respect it depends upon tradition. Through the whole of the mediaeval period there runs a traditional mysticism, moulding the same material of thought into a variety of forms. In this general current, after it had assumed the particular form given to it, first by Ruysbroek, and subsequently by the founders of the Brotherhood of the Common Lot, Thomas à Kempis occupies a place. He draws continually from the great traditionary stream. Along with his own experiences, he everywhere takes advantage of the insight, the sayings, and the exemplary lives of the Fathers and the Brethren, both far and near,[2] and blends them with his acute observation of life and profound knowledge of the human heart, into a far richer whole than any from the same circle had ever hitherto done. But even although this material be not to any great extent original, it yet acquires through the individuality of Thomas, compacting it into a beautiful unity, a new soul, something peculiarly lovely, amiable, and fresh, a tone of truth, a cheerfulness, and gentle warmth of heart, by virtue of which it produces quite a peculiar effect. This, in our opinion, is the chief quality, especially of the book of the Imitation of Jesus Christ. It charms us by truth which is the genuine reflex of the author's life and is self-evidenced in every word, by the heart that beats in it, by the pure, unmingled tone, the silver accent of inward genuineness, the simple child-like spirit which pervades the whole.

This unmixed simplicity of character was, in the case of Thomas, chiefly dependant upon his complete and entire abstraction from many things which create discord in the minds of other men. The world did not bewilder him; Art and nature with their glories and charms tempted him not away from his inward musings; Science suggested to him no riddles and doubts, occasioned him no

[1] De Wette has treated of this with very disproportionate brevity in his Geschichte der christl. Sittenlehre ii. 2. s. 247.

[2] Respecting the ascetical precepts, he himself says this in the Dialog. Novitior. p. 188: Hac consideratione inductus quorundam *prædecessorum* meorum *monita* et *exempla* huic opusculo inserere cogitavi.

conflicts and pains. He kept aloof from them. As the bent of his mind was exclusively heavenward,[1] his relation to civil and political life was purely negative. In his eyes it belonged to the world.[2] His bearing towards it was that of a pilgrim and stranger. In all his writings we do not discover one trace of interest in it. At the most we can only reckon as such the frequently recurring warning, that the devotee should beware of courting intercourse with the great and mighty,[3] a warning which he himself conscientiously followed. Art, especially in so far as it was consecrated to the service of religion, was more likely to have attracted his susceptible mind; especially considering that in the Netherlands it had already displayed great life and riches. The more considerable cities possessed numerous workshops of painters and statuaries.[4] The brothers Hubert and John van *Eyck* had executed the miracles of their pencil. *Hemmling* was Thomas' contemporary. The glories of Gothic architecture were presented to his eye; but they had no charms for him. At the most he had a taste for psalmody, in which he even tried his hand,[5] only however, for Sacred music, in the ascetic spirit.[6] Even nature appears to have been strange

[1] Hort. Rosar. i. 2, 8. p. 60.

[2] Francisc. Tolensis Vita Thom. c. xi. p. 29.

[3] *E.g.* Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 3, p. 12, and elsewhere. Of the fact, that by his simple book on the Imitation of Christ, he would one day find his way into the society of the great, Thomas himself had not the faintest foreboding.

[4] So early as 1396, Antwerp possessed five painter-and-sculptor-establishments, from which we may infer the number generally in the Netherlands. See Waagen on Hubert and John van Eyck, Breslau 1822, s. 62, a work affording much general information respecting the state of art at the time in the Netherlands.

[5] We possess a small *poetical Remains* from the pen of Thomas, consisting partly of short poems, some of them *versus memoriales*, containing ascetical and monastic rules, and partly connected with his main theme, viz., the doctrine of the Imitation of Jesus Christ and partly having more the character of ecclesiastical hymns, *Cantica spiritualia*, which celebrate the Trinity, the Passion of Christ, John, the Baptist and the Evangelist, the Virgin Mary, St Agnes, and other saints. The pious, childlike, and amiable mind of Thomas is expressed in these poems, but they do not manifest any particular talent or perfection in sacred poetry. In some passages they become puerile and sportive.

[6] Sermon. ad. Novit. iii. 9, p. 109.

to him.[1] While Ruysbroek was fond of musing in the forests of Grünthal, Thomas confined himself wholly to his cell, and warns the reader against even taking a walk, as calculated to disturb and distract the mind, and from which a man rarely returns improved.[2] Considering the school through which he passed, one might confidently have expected in Thomas an inclination for *science*; and of this he certainly is not wholly destitute. The ascetical impressions, however, which he had received at Daventer had speedily overgrown those of a scientific character, and he appreciated science only in its moral and practical aspects. Let us observe more narrowly what his relation to it was.

Thomas, according to the standard of the age, was not unlearned. He had very diligently read the Bible, and likewise its patristic and mystical expositors, and recommended to others in the most urgent manner the study of both. He expressed himself in the language of scholars, although not with elegance or purity, as he modestly acknowledges,[3] still with ease and fluency.[4] He loved good and useful books, and took a lively interest in their collec-

[1] The true monk has no desire to contemplate the beautiful: Diligere pulchra et appetere mollia, non est pro virtute castitatis. De Discipl. Claustr. xii. 1.

[2] De Imit. Chr. i. 20, 6 and 7, Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 4, p. 38. De Discipl. Claustral. vi. 4, p. 141. Thomas approves the remark of another author. "As often as I mingled in the company of men I came out of it less a man than I went in," (i.e. less humane in my dispositions). De Imit. Chr. i. 20, 2.

[3] Vita Flor. Prolog. 4: Potius eligerem ab aliis dictata in silentio legere, quam *rusticitate mea* claritatem illustrium virorum *barbarizando* obscurare. In point of fact numerous barbarisms do occur in the works of Thomas. On this account Sebastian Castellio was induced to translate into *elegant* Latin, the book of the Imitation of Christ, an undertaking in other respect very unsuitable. Castellio's version appeared at Basle in 1563, in 8vo., and subsequently went through several editions.

[4] George Pirkhaimer expresses himself in his critique upon Thomas (printed at the beginning of Sommalius' edition) in the following terms: Thomas de K. non eloquentiae, sed veritatis fiducia, haec opera condenda aggressus est: et oratione, quae de tenui fonte emanat, lumine tamen suo clara et illustris apparet. Franciscus Tolensis in Vit. Thom. §. 3: Stylus licet simplex, minime bracteatus sit, tamen dilucidus et apertus est: ut nusquam rerum verborumque inopia haereat, nusquam moleste perplexeque loquatur. Quae animo parturiebat, sentiebat, probabat, sermonis pauperie haud usque coactus fuit supprimere, scilicet liquide clareque sua exprimit omnia sensa.

tion, preservation, and use,[1] considering it as a necessary ornament of a good monastery to possess as rich and beautiful a library[2] as possible, and reckoning it one of the standing duties of a true monk, to read and write books. He likewise encouraged susceptible youths to the zealous prosecution of their studies, and even to the acquisition of a classical education. Several of the most meritorious restorers of ancient literature went forth from his quiet cell, and he lived to see in his old age his scholars, Rudolph Lange, Moritz Count of Spiegelberg, Louis Dringenberg, Antony Liber, and above all, Rudolph Agricola and Alexander Hegius, labouring with success for the revival of the sciences in Germany and the Netherlands. Accordingly Thomas was not without scientific culture himself, or the power of inspiring a taste for it in others. He even says, "Science, and just as little the simple knowledge of objects, whatever they may be, so far from being blameable, when considered in itself, is good and ordained of God;"[3] and in another passage,[4] "Nor must we blame that pious and modest investigation of truth which is always ready to receive instruction, and seeks to walk in the sound maxims of the Fathers." His entire position is however far from scientific, in the proper sense of the word, and is and remains, even in reference to science, ascetical. He imposes upon it very narrow limits—calls upon it to abstain from the metaphysical, the transcendental, and all deeper research into God and the world, not to occupy itself with the Empyrean heavens and the higher orders of Spiritual beings[5] (which speculative mysticism, and even Ruysbroek, brought within the range of contemplation), and to cherish the desire to know God, not as he is in himself, which the Schoolmen and even the philosophising ecclesiastical Fathers aspired to do, but simply as he is in us.[6] More especially, he considers science not as a relatively independent element of life, and possessing value on its own account, but appreciates and measures it on all occasions only by the

[1] Doctrinale Juven. cap. 4 and 5, p. 113 and 114.
[2] Ibid. c. vii. 2, p. 215.
[3] De Imit. Chr. 1, 3, 4.
[4] Ibid. iv. 18, 1.
[5] Sermon. ad. Novit. 1, 9, p. 23.
[6] Soliloq. animae i. 5, p. 3.

standard of edification, and proportionately underrates the theoretical to the practical. It is not merely that he insists, above all things, on simple faith, inasmuch as "Human reason is weak and liable to err, which true faith is not."[1] It is not merely that he lays down the principle, as we find Anselm also doing, that "all reason and natural investigation ought to *follow* faith, not to precede or impair it."[2] But he puts no value upon any knowledge that is not of direct moral utility, and if ever he concedes any thing to science, always immediately annexes an antithesis by which the concession is as good as done away. If he has pronounced it to be good, he does not fail to say,[3] "But a pure conscience and a virtuous life are always to be preferred." If he has insisted on toleration for it, he proceeds,[4] "But blessed the simplicity which leaves the path of knotty questions and walks safely in the way of the divine commandments! . . . . . You are required to have faith and an untainted life, not high intelligence or deep insight into the mysteries of God. If you do not know or comprehend things beneath you, how will you understand those which are above? Submit yourself to God, humble your mind to believe, and the light of knowledge will be given you, in as far as it is salutary and needful." If he has admitted that "Every man has by nature a desire of knowledge,"[5] he adds the restriction, "But of what avail is knowledge without the fear of God? Better the simple peasant who serves God than the proud philosopher who, neglecting himself, contemplates the courses of the stars," or "I would rather experience compunction than know how to define it,"[6] and "What will it profit you to hold deep disquisitions about the Trinity, if you want that humbleness of mind which alone is pleasing to it?"[7]—All which propositions[8] are perfectly true and morally weighty, but at the

[1] De Imit. Christi. iv. 18, 4.

[2] Ibid. iv. 18, 5: Omnis ratio et naturalis investigatio fidem *sequi* debet, non *præcedere* nec infringere.

[3] Ibid. i. 3, 4.

[4] Ibid. iv. 18, 1 and 2.

[5] Ibid. i. 2, 1.

[6] Ibid. i. 1, 3.

[7] Ibid.

[8] To this belongs also what Thomas says in the *Doctrinale Juven.* ii. 1, "It is a great fault to speak bad Latin in schools, but it is a still greater, daily to offend God by sinning, and to feel no sorrow for doing so."

same time depreciatory of science, inasmuch as they put it into connection with something bad, such as pride or want of self-acquaintance, and oppose to it morality and piety, as if these could not be united with it nor serve as its basis.

But while thus unduly depreciating mere knowledge as a thing insufficient of itself, only ministering to presumption, and inflating the mind, he, on the other hand, enjoins something of a far better sort, and which is at once practical in its nature and comprehensive of perfect humility, viz., *Wisdom*.[1] Knowledge of itself is profane and humanly restricted. It derives its origin from the world, and entangles us with it. Wisdom, on the contrary, is heavenly and pure. It comes from God, and leads back to him again.[2] In respect of its nature it is moral and holy, for not merely is it a higher and divinely-bestowed intelligence of the one thing needful for man to know, but it is, at the same time, divine freedom and divine peace,[3] including within it the chief good, for which every man, by virtue of the deepest and inmost want of his nature, cannot but long.

Every man aspires after that which is good, and endeavours to exhibit some thing of the kind in his life. Every man wishes inward contentment and happiness, and pants for freedom as the best blessing which could fall to his lot.[4] But the question is, where is all this to be found? And on that point, before every other, we must be informed, in order not to be deceived with the semblance of good, as so many are. It is certain—and this proposition of the Bible Thomas incessantly repeats—that the truth should and will make us free. But where is the proper, essential, imperishable, and ever satisfying truth?

All this, truth, freedom, peace, blessedness, the substantial and imperishable good must be sought—as is in the first place Thomas' opinion—not in *the things of the world*.[5] Their na-

[1] De Imit. Chr. i., iii. 31, 32, and many other passages, which are to be found extracted in the above cited dissertation by Scholtz, s. 22—34.

[2] Ibid. iii. 3, 1.

[3] Ibid. iii. 4, 1, Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 3, p. 33. De fideli Dispensatore i. 29, p. 161.

[4] Soliloq. anim. xii. 1, 2, p. 21.

[5] Scholtz, s. 119—139.

ture is vain, their possession transient, their enjoyment accompanied with sorrow, their pleasures outweighed by their pains. For life is full of tribulations,[1] and inscribed on every side with the cross.[2] It is like a great cross, which a man is able to bear only when he is himself borne upon another.[3] In the world, and its life of sense, man finds no true satisfaction, but disturbance and distraction, misery and death, and for a recompense, the eternal pains of hell. And just as little ought he to seek his peace *among the creatures*—that is, his fellow-men. They are frail, changeable, uncertain, and deceptive.[4] Every man is a liar, a sinner, an imperfect being.[5] With such a being the chief good can never be found; as it cannot with any of the creatures at all. For the same reason, neither ought a man to seek it *in himself*, for he must recognize himself as in all things a dependent and transitory being, and above all, as corrupt, and in every circumstance of his life sinful, erring, and defective,[6] drawn down by his sensuality, or pushed aloft by his pride,[7] but always governed by caprice and selfishness.

Well might man be lord of the earth, if his senses were but subjected to his reason, and his reason to the will of God.[8] This he was destined to be; but this he is not. "His nature, originally good, was depraved by the first man, and infected with sin,[9] so that, when left to itself, it inclines him to that which is base and wicked. For the little power that remains is but as a spark buried in ashes.[10] That spark is the natural reason, which, surrounded with thick darkness, and though still preserving a sense of the difference between good and evil, truth and falsehood, is yet incompetent to execute all that it approves, and attain to

[1] De Imit. Chr. iii. 20, 3 and 4.

[2] Tota vita ista mortalis plena est miseriis et circumsignata Crucibus. De Imit. Chr. ii. 12, 7.

[3] Ibid., ii. 12, 5: Si libenter Crucem portas, portabit te et ducet te ad desideratum finem.

[4] Ibid. i. 22, 6 and 23,1 sqq.

[5] Soliloq. anim. v. 1, p. 9.

[6] De Imit. Chr. iii. 45, 4, Sermon. ad Novit. i. 8, p. 23.

[7] Vallis lilior. xi. 1, p. 83.

[8] De Imit. Chr. iii. 53, 2.

[9] Ibid. iii. 55, 2 sqq.

[10] Modica vis, quae remansit, est tanquam scintilla quaedam latens in cinere.

the full light of truth, or to soundness of affection. . . . . Hence, it is that with my flesh I serve the law of sin, being more obedient to my senses than to my reason. 'To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' This is the cause why I often purpose many good things; but through lack of grace to aid my weakness, shrink from the smallest resistance, and loose heart. Hence, I know the way of perfection, and see with sufficient clearness how I ought to act; but oppressed with the weight of my corruption, I fail to rise to that which is the more perfect." Accordingly, that which, in opposition to grace, Thomas styles the nature of man, has in the delineation he makes of it, the following properties.[1] It seeks its own profit and advantage; and is fond of being honoured and respected. It looks to the things that are temporal, rejoices in earthly gains, mourns over earthly losses, and is provoked by the slightest injury. It is more willing to receive than to give, and loves its own peculiar things. It courts enjoyment and idleness, and is charmed with the beautiful and curious. It is strongly inclined to the creatures and the flesh, willingly seeks consolation from outward sources, rejoices in the multitude of friends and relatives, in nobility of birth and powerful connections; while, on the contrary, it flies from all that is humble and obscure, from every slight and humiliation, will not consent to be out-done, to obey, to suffer, or to die. In a word, it refers all to self, and strives and contends only for its own profit, and transitory enjoyments.

If, then, such be the case with the world, with men, and with one's own natural self, Where can man find that which is truly good, and which enduringly satisfies? Not in the multitude of things, which distract, but in the *one* which collects and unites. For the one does not proceed out of the many, but the many out of the one. That one is the one thing needful, the chief good, and nothing better and higher either exists, or can even be conceived.[2] "For such a Being," says Thomas,[3] "my soul most vehemently longs—for One who is greater, better, and

[1] De Imit. Chr. iii. 54, 1—8.

[2] Soliloq. anim. xii. 1, 2.

[3] Ibid. xv. 5, xii. 1.

worthier, than any other can be, and who abounds with all good things." Such a Being is God. He alone it is who can quiet the longing of the heart, and make it wholly tranquil and happy[1]. Compared with Him the creature is nothing, and only becomes anything when in fellowship with him. "Whatever is not God," says Thomas,[2] "is nothing,[3] and should be counted as nothing. That man will long remain little and grovelling himself, who esteems any thing great, save the one infinite and eternal good. . . . All that does not proceed from God must perish."[4] Here we find Thomas agreeing in words with Eckart of the Free Spirit. Both say, God is all and man nothing.[5] But with what difference of meaning! Eckart understands the proposition metaphysically, and thinks of God as the one only Being, the universal substance, in respect of which all created existence is but accidental; Whereas Thomas understands the proposition morally, and thinks of God as the chief good, who has permitted rational creatures to have a real subsistence, although not one independent of him. According to Eckart, man only requires to bear in mind his true and eternal nature, in order to be himself God; according to Thomas, God, as himself the most perfect person, in the exercise of free grace, and from the fulness of the blessings that reside in him, is pleased to impart personality to men in order that, although morally considered, they are themselves nothing, they may, through him, and in voluntary fellowship with him, attain to true existence and eternal life.

To enter into fellowship with God, the chief good and fountain of blessedness, and *to become one with him, is the basis of all true contentment.*[6] But how can two such parties, God and man, the Creator and the creature, be brought together? God is in heaven and man on earth; God is perfect and man sensual, vain, and sinful.[7] There must, therefore, be mediation, some way in which

[1] Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 4.

[2] De Imit. Chr. iii. 31, 2. [3] Quicquid Deus non est, *nihil* est.

[4] Ibid. iii. 32, 1.

[5] Ibid., iii. 14, 3: ubi nihil aliud me esse invenio, quam *nihil* et *nihil.*

[6] Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 4. p. 34: Hoc praecipue penset, qualiter *unionem cum Deo* habere possit, qui in pacifico corde locum ad habitandum quaerit. Other passages in Scholtz s. 139—172.

[7] Soliloq. anim. xiii. 1, p. 24.

God *comes* to man and man to God, and both unite. This union of man with God depends upon a twofold condition, one negative and the other positive. The negative is that man shall wholly renounce what can give him no true peace. He must forsake the world, which offers to him so much hardship and distress and whose very pleasures turn into pains; he must detach himself from the creatures,[1] for nothing defiles and entangles the heart so much as impure love of them, and only when a man has advanced so far as no longer to seek consolation from any creature, does he enjoy God,[2] and find consolation in him; he must, in fine, die to, and deny himself, and wholly renounce selfishness and self love.[3] for whoever loves himself will find, wherever he seeks, only his own little, mean, and sinful self,[4] without being able to find God. This last is the hardest of all tasks,[5] and can only be attained by deep and earnest self-acquaintance. But whosoever strictly exercises self-examination, will infallibly come to recognise himself in his meanness, littleness, and nonentity, and will be led to the most perfect humility, entire contrition, and ardent longing after God.[6] For only when man has become little and nothing in his own eyes, can God become great[7] to him, only when he has emptied himself of all created things can God replenish him with his grace.[8] A great many of Thomas' sayings pertained to this subject. Of these we shall adduce a few. "The farther man recedes from the consolations of earth, the nearer he draws to God; and the deeper he descends into himself, and the more vile he becomes in his own sight, the higher does he rise towards God.[9] Wert thou sensible of thine own nothingness, and emptied of all love to the creatures, I would then shed forth my grace largely upon

[1] De Imit. Chr. ii. 8, 5.
[2] Ibid. i. 25, 11.
[3] Ibid. ii. 11, 4.
[4] Ibid. ii. 7, 3. ii. 12, 4.
[5] Ibid. iii. 53, 3. Hort. Rosar. xvi. 1, p. 71: Amor sui, laesio sui: oblivio mundi, inventio coeli.
[6] Haec est altissima et utilissima lectio, sui ipsius vera cognitio et despectio. De Imit. Chr. i. 2, 4.
[7] Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 7, p. 47.
[8] De Imit. Chr. iii. 8, 1, iii. 42, 2.
[9] Ibid. iii. 42, 1. Comp. Epist. 6, p. 178.

thee.[1] As long as you fix your eyes upon the creatures, you loose the view of the Creator, . . . All consists in bearing the cross, and in dying upon it. And there is no other way to life and true peace of mind, but that of the holy cross, and of daily mortification.[2] . . . If you dispose yourself for that to which you are appointed, viz., suffering and mortification, it will soon be better with you, and you will find peace.[3] . . . The more any one dies to himself, so much the more does he begin to live to God.[4] . . . Take always the lowest place, and the highest will be given you, for the highest depends on the lowest.[5] . . . Without first humbling yourself, you will never ascend to heaven."[6] Great is the sacrifice which is here required at the hands of man, being no less than inward annihilation and parting with all that is his own, but the requisition is immediately coupled with a promise as great, viz., that he shall receive God. God has given all to man, and desires that man may give himself back[7] to the Giver, in order to receive God fully in return. Thomas puts the following language into the mouth of God,[8] "My son, that thou mayest possess all, thou must wholly surrender thyself, reserving nothing. Forsake thyself and thou shalt find me. Have nothing of thine own, not even thy will, and great will be thy gain.[9] Without the total abnegation of self, thou canst not attain perfect liberty.[10] They who seek their own and love themselves are fettered slaves. *Give* then *all for all*, ask for nothing and require nothing back, continue wholly and stedfastly attached to me, and thou shalt possess me. Thou wilt be free in thy heart, and no darkness will cover thee. Let it be the aim of thy endeavours, prayers, and desires, to despoil thyself of all that is thine own, to follow Jesus naked as he was naked, to die to thyself, and live for ever to me."[11]

Here, however, we have already made the transition to the positive side of the matter. Not only must a man become free

[1] De Imit. Chr. iii. 42, 2.
[2] Ibid. ii. 12, 3.
[3] Ibid. ii. 12, 12.
[4] Ibid. §. 14.
[5] Ibid ii. 10, 4.
[6] Sermon ad Novit. ii. 8, p. 52.
[7] De Imit. Chr. 9, 2.
[8] Ibid. iii. 27, 1.
[9] Ibid. iii. 37, 1.
[10] Ibid iii. 32, 1.
[11] Ibid. iii. 37, 3.

from the world, the creatures, and himself[6] but God must also impart himself to him, in order that he may thenceforth live to God. The two things, however, being dependent upon each other, and taking place simultaneously, cannot be effected by man alone, but are brought about essentially by God, and through divine *grace*.[1] Man cannot by his own strength rise above his own level, and can only become fully participant of God by God's imparting himself to him, and infusing into him his spirit and his love. Having condensed his whole doctrine into the short rule, "*Part with all and thou will find all*," he immediately subjoins,[2] "Lord, this is not the work of a day, nor a game for children. These few words include all perfection." Here, accordingly, an efficacy must intervene which is superior to human strength. This efficacy is divine love imparting itself to man, and becoming the mediatrix between God and him, between heaven and earth.[3] Love brings together the holy God who dwells in Heaven and the sinful creature upon earth, uniting that which is most humble with that which is most exalted.[4] It is the truth that makes man free, but the highest truth is love.[5] Divine love, imparting and manifesting itself to man, is grace. God sheds forth his love into the heart of man, who thereby acquires liberty, peace, and ability for all good things; and, made partaker of this love, man reckons as worthless all that is less than God, loving God only, and loving himself no more, or, if at all, only for God's sake.[6] He loves all things in God, and is filled with the purest spirit of devotion, the most active zeal to do good. "Love," as Thomas in a sort of hymn pronounces her eulogy,[7] "love is truly a mighty good. It lightens the heaviest loads and smooths the inequalities of life. It bears the burden without feeling it, and gives sweetness and

[1] Soliloq. anim. xxiii. 8, p. 50. De Imit. Chr. iii. 55, 2 sqq. In the first of these passages the words are: Sufficit mihi gratia Dei . . Quid enim est omnis conatus meus sine illa?

[2] De Imit, Chr. iii. 32, 1 and 2.

[3] Illustrated with passages, Scholtz s. 172 sq.

[4] Charitas conjungit summa infimis, transit per media, redit ad summa, unum efficit de multis. Hortul. rosar. xiii. 1, p. 68.

[5] Soliloq. anim. x. 8, p. 18.

[6] Concio. xvii. de amore Jesu. p. 193, and many other passages.

[7] De Imit. Chr. iii. 5, 3 sq.

relish to the bitterest things. It prompts to great enterprises, and kindles the desire of higher and higher perfection. It aspires upwards, and will not be restrained by the things of this earth. . . . Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nor more extensive, nor more pleasing, nor more full, nor more excellent in heaven or on earth, for love is born of God, and cannot find rest, but by rising above all created things to rest in God. It flies and runs, and is full of alacrity. It is free, and knows no restraint. It gives all for all, and possesses all in all, because it reposes in the one Supreme good, from which every good originates and flows. It regards not gifts, but rises above all blessings to Him who bestows them. It sees no difficulty, cares for no labour, and attempts what is above its strength, It complains not of impossibility, but looking upon all things as both possible and lawful, it has ability for all. Though exhausted it is never weary, though straitened not enslaved, and though alarmed not confounded; but, like a lively flame and burning torch, it darts upwards, and forces a safe passage through every obstacle. . . . . Not that it is soft and fickle, or intent upon vain things, but strong, manly, prudent, circumspect, sober, chaste, stedfast, and calm, keeping a constant guard over the senses." He who has found love has found the best of things. "Love is of itself sufficient;"[1] in it he possesses all that he can ever want. "Nothing is better for thee, nothing more salutary, nothing more pleasant, nothing worthier and higher, nothing more perfect and blessed, than most ardently to love and most highly to praise God. This I say a hundred times, and a thousand times do I repeat, do it as long as thou livest and possessest feeling and thought. Do it by word and deed, by day and by night, at morning, noon, and eve, every hour and every moment."[2] True love to God, inasmuch as it springs from the renunciation of self, and the deepest sense of needing Him, likewise includes in it the purest *humility;* and humility is the fountain of wisdom and peace, more than lofty knowledge.[3]

Love is the means of uniting the will of man with the will of

[1] Soliloq. anim. xviii. 3, p. 39: Amor per se satis est, tantum ferveat mecumque perseveret.

[2] Vall. lilior. xxvi., i. p. 98.

[3] Concio xvi. de quadrages. jejun. p. 193.

God. He who loves God traces all things back to their first cause,[1] and submits himself unconditionally to his will; and what can impart a higher *peace?* "If you aim at and seek after that only which is well-pleasing to God, and profitable to your neighbour, you will enjoy inward peace. Every creature will be to you a mirror of life, and a book of sacred doctrine, and none of them so humble and vile, but will shew forth to you the divine goodness."[2] He who thus loves and whom love leads to devote himself to God, can say,[3] "Lord, give me what thou wilt, and in what measure, and at what time thou wilt. Deal with me as thou wilt, as thou seest to be best, as best pleaseth thee, and will best tend to thy honor. . . . . If it be thy will to leave me in darkness, Blessed be thy name! Or if it be thy will that I should walk in thy light, Blessed also be thy name![4] I desire[5] to receive with indifference from thy hand, good and evil, sweet and bitter, joy and sorrow, and to be thankful for all that befalls me." In fine, divine love is also the means of restoring the right connection between man and man. It is not merely that thenceforth we love men purely and freely in God, and for God's sake, and no more with a sensuous and creature-affection. But, moreover, all we have it in our power to do for them, all good works and virtues, thereby acquire their worth and importance. Love becomes not merely the incentive, but the very *soul of virtue*, that which first gives it its proper life.[6] Without love the greatest achievement is nothing; but love makes the smallest great and divine. "Without the love of God and our neighbour," says Thomas,[7] "no works are of any avail, even although they may be commended by men; they are but like empty vessels without oil, and lamps that give no light in the dark." And in another passage,[8] "Without love no external work profiteth anything, but any work, however trifling and contemptible, if done from love, is fruitful; for God pays more regard to the disposition from which we act than to the amount we perform. He does much who loves much. He

[1] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 9, p. 24.
[2] De Imit. Chr. ii. 4, 1.
[3] Ibid. iii. 15, 2.
[4] Ibid. iii. 17, 2.
[5] Ibid. §. 3.
[6] Scholtz, s. 73—81.
[7] De Imit. Chr. i. 15, 1.
[8] Ibid. §. 3.

does much, who does well that which he does; and he does well that which he does who subserves the common good more than his own will. . . . . He who has true and perfect love does not seek himself in anything, but only desires that God may be glorified. He cares not to have joy in himself, but refers all to God, from whom, as their source, all blessings flow, and in whom, as their final end, all saints find a blissful repose."

It may excite surprise that in the whole preceding exposition, though mostly made up of quotations from Thomas' Imitation of Christ, no express mention is made of Christ's *person*. Although however, not expressly, this has been implicitly done all the way; for he who names God and love has, according to the views of Thomas, also named Christ; and to speak of humility, self-denial, mortification, living in God, peace, and blessedness, is virtually to speak of Him. In Thomas' conception, Christ is the actual love of God manifested, uniting humanity with divinity; He is the prototype of perfect self-relinquishment and oneness with God, of unalterable peace and untroubled blessedness in God. His cross is the universal cross,[1] his victory the victory of all the good who love God. The reception of Jesus into the heart is the reception of the divine love. Embracing there his passion and death, or, in other words, his cross, becomes the dying and crucifixion of self. The imitation of Jesus is the life of holy humility, self-denial, and affectionate labour for others. Hence the doctrine of the *Imitation of Christ* is of so great importance to Thomas, not merely in the book which bears that title, but generally in all his writings. Even in the smallest of his poems, it forms the leading thought.[2] Side by side with the fundamental maxim, "Give thyself wholly to God, and thou wilt wholly receive him," stands another of no less weight, nay, substantially equivalent, "Receive Christ, let him be found within thee, follow him and imitate his example,

[1] Comp. the sect. de regia via s. Crucis, de Imit. Chr. ii. 12.

[2] Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 3. p. 33. Ibid. Serm. 8. p. 52. Concio xii. de quat. modis videndi Christum p. 185. Soliloq. anim. xiii. 3. p. 24. Thomas expresses in poetry his thoughts on the Imitation of Christ, in the Vita boni Monachi p. 279 and 281, where two poems begin with the words: Vitam Jesu Christi stude imitari.

and with him thou hast all."[1] In Thomas' mind Christ no less than God, is the all in all, the Divine image, the pattern of the active as well as of the contemplative life,[2] of how to act and how to suffer. He is the Master of all, the book and the rule of the religious, the model of the clergy, the doctrine of the laity, the text and commentary of the decrees, the light of believers, the rejoicing of the righteous, the praise of angels, the end and consummation of all the longing of the saints.[3] How holy, then, the soul which wholly denies self, and moulds its entire life into conformity with Christ![4] Christ sacrificed himself completely for us, and in his body and blood, is constantly imparting himself to us, in order that we may wholly become his, and continue to be so, and may live in him more than in ourselves.[5] All others are to be loved for Jesus' sake, but Jesus, like God, for his own.[6] He should be with us always, wherever we go,[7] and dwell in us and walk with us. "If in all things thou seekest Jesus, thou wilt find him in them all. If in all things thou seekest thyself, thou wilt indeed find what thou seekest, but to thine own destruction."[8] Above all, let Christ crucified live in us,[9] and *His cross* be wholly imprinted upon our hearts.[10] To receive Christ crucified into the heart is the basis of all good.[11] He pervades the whole inner man, and always and on every hand incites to good thoughts and deeds, fortifies timidity, drives away doubt, confirms faith, infuses love, and animates zeal.[12] "In Christ the consummation of all the virtues beams forth as in a pure mirror, and in no book or science can any thing better or more perfect be found or known than in this book of life, which is the true light.

[1] De Discipl. Claustr. xiii. 1. p. 147.
[2] Ibid: Qui tam in vita activa quam contemplativa perfectissime hominem docet sine errore et multis argumentis.
[3] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 3. p. 11.
[4] Ibid.
[5] De Discipl. Claustr. xiii. 3. p. 148.
[6] De Imit. Chr. ii. 8, 4.
[7] Jesus et Maria, sint mecum semper in via. Exercit. spirit. v. 2. p. 201.
[8] De Imit. Chr. ii. 7, 3.
[9] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 4. p. 12 and 13.
[10] Epist. 3. p. 173.
[11] Sermon. ad Novit. ii 4. p. 35.
[12] Ibid.

But sweeter than incense is the perfume which the passion of my Master exhales, comprehending in it a compendium of all graces."[1] And this passion or the cross of our Master principally teaches us, what elsewhere appears in Thomas' eyes, the sum of all virtue, viz., the surrender of our own will, obedience unto death, renunciation of the pleasures of the world, and cheerful patience in affliction.

According as Thomas apprehends the matter, Christ must be received into the heart, in a manner consistent with his nature and spirit, and must there take the place of the person's self. The image of Jesus, too, is always to be conceived in its totality, "He is to me,[2] when I duly reflect upon the subject, whole and entire in particulars, nor does any difference of appearance or age change my belief of the truth, because Christ is undivided, and in all these forms equally to be adored." But we may nevertheless select the several points of his life and character, and hold them up to view. For in all these, we find doctrine and example; and thus again Thomas uses the life of Christ, even to the minutest point, as a pattern for himself and others. In this respect he goes so far as to seek in Christ a precedent for transcribing books. In preaching upon that passage of the Gospel which tells us that Jesus "stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground," he says,[3] "It is pleasing to hear that Jesus could read and write, to the end that the art of writing and zeal in reading pious books may delight us the more. Take pleasure then in imitating Him, even in reading and writing, for it is a good, meritorious, and pious work to write such books, as Jesus loves, and in which he is confessed and made known, and to keep them with the utmost care." In this manner, accordingly, a man may set the example of Christ before him in all the occurrences of life and, at all times and in all respects, ought to mould himself into conformity with it, and according to the measure of human weakness, repeat Jesus in his own person.

It is true that dying to self, appropriating Christ, and becoming one with God, are generally represented by Thomas as a single

[1] Concio xii de quat. modis videndi Christum, p. 185.
[2] Ibid. p. 183.
[3] Concio xx. de scriptura Jesu, p. 198.

act; but this is not to be understood as implying, that the operation is perfected in a single moment.[1] On the contrary, it embraces the entire being, and progresses to greater and greater perfection, through the whole course of life. Only by degrees,[2] and under a lasting conflict, which, however, is ever more and more becoming victory and peace, can the inward death and the inward life be consummated. Contrition must still be renewed afresh, and mortification take place in ever larger measure. A man should extirpate a vice every year,[3] and signalize every day and minute by an advancement in good, and some action calculated to please God.[4] He should unite himself by an ever closer and closer approximation to God, until at length he is wholly dissolved and swallowed up in the divine love, and God within him, is one and all.[5]

This explicative process, however dependent upon one decisive act of self-surrender and dedication to God, being nevertheless carried on gradually, and in the face of difficulty and opposition, and never but disturbed by some alloy of sin,[6] may yet be expedited by the use of certain means, and the adoption of a particular method of life. And here it is, that Thomas brings in *asceticism* and makes the transition to monkery. While the sect of the Free Spirit taught that for the contemplative man all outward things are indifferent; and while Master Eckart advanced the dangerous tenet, that to such a man, the test of a thing's being good, is merely his own inclination impelling him to it, we find in Thomas the very opposite. He says,[7] "No man is wholly secure from temptations, so long as he lives, for he has that which is the cause of them within himself." He teaches,[8] "We must not believe every word we

[1] Non enim *subita conversione*, says Thomas of the Apostles, whom he nevertheless contemplates as exemplars, nec una tantummodo die ad tam magnam perfectionem ascenderunt. Concio xxiii. de Spirit. sancto, p. 249.

[2] Exercitia spirit. (2d Tractate with this title) i. 1. p. 208: *Paulatim* proficit homo, et hoc per quotidiana exercitia. De Imit. Chr. i. 13, 4.

[3] De Imit. Chr. i. 11, 5.

[4] Epist. 1. p. 169.

[5] De Imit. Chr. iv. 13. 1. and Soliloq. anim. xxi. 3. p. 45.

[6] Quamdiu in hoc mundo sum, mundus non sum. Soliloq. anim. c. 5, 1. p. 9.

[7] De Imit. Chr. i. 13, 3. Compare i. 16, 4.

[8] Ibid. i. 4, 1. Compare iii. 7, 3. iii. 11, 2.

hear, nor follow every impulse; but we must cautiously and leisurely deliberate the matter in its relation to God. . . . . Take council of some prudent and conscientious man, and seek rather to be instructed by one who is better than yourself, than to follow your own suggestions."[1] He lays the whole stress upon breaking self-will: "The cross consists in breaking self-will, and only the way of the cross is the way of life."[2] He everywhere insists upon a manful resistance to sensuality, upon guarding all the senses through which the temptation to evil may come,[3] and, in order to enjoy solitude and sequestration in every place, upon building as it were a cell or tabernacle within one's own heart, and making in it but one window for the admission of Christ.[4] It is only by closing the gates of sensuality, that it is possible for a man to hear within him the word of the Lord, and calmly and collectedly to ponder on that which concerns his salvation. In order to bear up successfully in the conflict with sensuality and self, Thomas prescribes a series of religious and moral exercises, partly of a private and partly of a public kind. The private are,[5] solitude, silence, fasting, prayer, reading and even copying the Scriptures[6] and other useful books, submission to the direction of a superior, self-examination daily, and chiefly in the morning and at night, repeated recollection of God, eternity, heaven and hell, and unremitted occupation either of the body or the mind from the earliest to the latest hour of the day. The public are, regular attendance on divine worship, a zealous observance of all sacred rites and seasons, the faithful adoration of Mary and the saints, and a frequent participation of the Holy Supper. "Rise early, watch, pray, labour, read, write, be silent, sigh, and bravely endure all adversity;"[7] these are Thomas' rules of life, which he never wearies of again and again repeating.

[1] De Imit. Chr. i. 4, 2. Compare i. 9, 1.

[2] Epist. iii. p. 173.

[3] Claude sensualitatis tuae ostia. De Imit. Chr. iii. 1, 2. Oportet viriliter appetitui sensitivo contraire. iii. 11, 2. In the same way iii. 13, 2. Sermon. ad Novit. i. 2. p. 29. ii. 10. p. 63.

[4] De Solitud. et Silent. i. 24. p. 231.

[5] Hortul. Rosar. xiv. 1. p. 70. Vall. lilior. i. 1. p. 77. xxxi. 4. p. 104.

[6] Vall. lilior. xxi. 2. p. 93.

[7] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 6. p. 18. Hortul. Rosar. xiv. 2. p. 70.

In this manner Thomas' religious views of things pass through the intermediate stage of asceticism, and at last end in *monachism*.[1] He shares the notion of almost the whole mediaeval period, in reckoning monachism the highest stage of the Christian life, and the monk the perfect Christian. This entailed two consequences: In the first place, much of a merely monkish nature mixes itself up in his mind with general Christianity, as we see even in the treatise of the Imitation of Christ, which contains numerous passages calculated exclusively for monks;[2] Secondly, general Christian truth is viewed by him as the basis of monachism. This is shown in all his writings specially designed for monks, to whom in these he addresses the same religious and moral requirements as to every Christian, only superadding others of a higher kind. For the ideal which Thomas formed of monachism was certainly of no mean kind; here, as everywhere else, he evinces the same spirituality and rigour.

Trained ascetically from his youth up, Thomas was full of lively zeal for the monastic life. It is true that, prudent and gentle, in his sentiments, he by no means wholly condemns life in the world. On the contrary, in a comparison, such as elsewhere is often found, of the contemplative life with Mary, and of the active with Martha,[3] he admits that the part which Martha chose is also laudable and pleasing to God, and he insists that the sisters should not dispute to which the preference is due, but, mutually owning each other's advantages, unite in the common service of Christ. The part chosen by Mary, however, which here means the contemplative, and chiefly the cloisteral life, was to him the more eligible and pleasant,[4] and he would have recommended every one, to lead even the active life, rather in the cloister than in the world, which he considered quite practicable. In the same way Thomas also admits,[5] that it is not given to every one to forsake all, renounce the world, and embrace the monastic life; and it is for this reason that the

[1] Scholtz in the above cited Treatise, s. 62–78.
[2] E.g. Book i. cap. 25.
[3] De fideli Dispensatore ii. 1—6.
[4] . . . : eligibilior pars Mariae et suavior.
[5] De Imit. Chr. iii. 10, 2.

devotees of contemplation are so few in number.[1] At the same time, however, he expresses himself strongly against the men of the world attempting to restrain the young from entering the monastery, and refutes the objections current amongst them.[2] Nowhere, as he thought, but in the cell, in which he felt himself so happy, could man be fully withdrawn from the world. The society of brethren living in one house, under the same governor, and according to the same rule, engaging in the same prayers, devotional exercises, and labour, and mutually encouraging and supporting each other in all things, appeared to him the most charming picture of the Christian life,[3] and one no where else to be found. But from this point of view he also required much of the true monk and the proper monastery. "It is not the hood," he says, "which makes a monk, for it may be worn by an ass."[4] All depends upon the inward frame of mind. As little had he any toleration for stupid and ignorant monks. "Woe," says he with severe rebuke,[5] "to the clergyman without education or knowledge of the Scriptures, for he often becomes the occasion of error, both to himself and others! A clergyman without the Holy Scriptures is a soldier without weapons, a horse without a bridle, a ship without a rudder, a writer without a pen, and a bird without wings. And equally, a monastery which wants the Scriptures, is a kitchen without pots, a table without dishes, a well without water, a river without fish, a garden without flowers, a purse without money, and a house without furniture." Accordingly zeal for the study of Scripture, and some degree, however moderate, of theological education, are held by Thomas as indispensable requisites for the monastic clergyman. Still more so, however, did he reckon the Christian virtues, first those of a more general kind, which we have already detailed, and then the particular ones, which specially pertain to him. These are partly some of universal obligation upon monks, to wit poverty, chastity, and obedience, and partly others more specific, such as humility, patience, silence, a fondness for solitude, self-contemplation, and entire

[1] De Imit. Chr. iii. 31, 1.
[2] Dialog. Novitior. c. 4, especially §. 7. p. 194. Epist. 4. p. 175. 176.
[3] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 1, p. 2.
[4] Ibid. ii. 5, p. 41.
[5] Doctrinale Juven. vii. 2, p. 215.

mortification.[1] Religious poverty has in his eyes an equal value with martyrdom.[2] He cannot sufficiently enforce the virtue of punctual obedience, to which he was himself inured from his youth up.[3] Although he does not condemn wise and edifying conversation, silence appears to him always more advisible than speaking,[4] solitude much more conducive to improvement than society, and prolonged abstraction and consideration of the things which promote contrition, the conditions of an ever increasing fellowship with God.[5] Thomas further requires from the monk as specially incumbent, a strictly methodical life, unintermitted activity, avoidance of all singularity, zeal in the social religious excercises, and affectionate activity for the common good of the brethren. He often gives summaries of the chief rules of the monastic life; of which we shall quote the two following instances: "Prompt obedience, frequent prayer, devout meditation,

[1] Delineations of monastic life as it ought to be, and precepts and maxims for monks, may be found in all the works of Thomas. I will here refer to a few of the principal passages. Sermon ad Novit. P. i. Serm. 1, p. 2; Serm. 2, p. 5; Serm. 3, p. 6; Serm. 4, p. 12 and 14; Serm. 6, p. 18; Serm. 9, p. 24; P. ii. Serm. 4, p. 37; P. iii. Serm. 4, p. 83; Serm. 11, p. 118; Sermon. ad Fratr. 7, p. 113; Vallis lilior. xv. 1, p. 86; xviii. 1 sqq. p. 89, 4, p. 90. The whole work de disciplina Claustralium, especially cap. i. p. 131; cap. iv. p, 136 sqq; cap. vii. 4, p. 142. Dialog. Novitiorum, especially cap. 3, p. 191, c. 4, p. 193. Exercit. spirit. (Second collection) c. 15, p. 211. Enchiridion Monachor. p. 249—252. Vita boni Monachi in verses that rhyme, p. 277—283. Where among other things it is said:

Sustine vim patiens.
Tace, ut sis sapiens.
Mores rege, aures tege.
Saepe ora, saepe lege.
Omni die, omni hora,
Te resigna sine mora.

A Short Compendium of Monastic life is also to be found Epist. 5. p. 178—180.

[2] Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 2, p. 31.

[3] Especially in actual examples, as Vita Flor. xxi. 2, Vit. Lub. Berneri §. 6.; and then, De Discipl. Claustr. iv. 1 sqq. p. 136.

[4] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 4, p. 13; i. 7, p. 20. Ibid. ii. 3, p. 32. Serm. ad Fratr. 8, p. 135; Exerc. spirit. ii. 2, p. 199; iv. 1, p. 200. De Solit. et Silent. ii. 28, p. 239.

[5] Serm. ad Fratr. 7, p. 133. Hort. Rosar. i. 2, p. 59. Vall. lilior. xviii. 1, p. 89. Thomas has composed a particular treatise upon the salutary effects of *solitude* and *silence*. De Solitudine et Silentio p. 225—242.

diligence in labour, fondness for study, the avoidance of conversation, and a relish for solitude—these are what make a good monk and give a peaceful mind."[1] . . . "The things which are above all necessary and profitable both for a man's own advancement in virtue, and for the edification of others,[2] are solitude, silence, manual labour, prayer, reading, meditating upon the Scriptures, poverty, temperance, oblivion of one's native country, flying from the world, the quiet of a monastery, frequenting the choir, and remaining in the cell."[3] If we add the transcription of edifying books,[4] we shall have mentioned all that Thomas was wont to recommend to monastic brethren.

Thomas was himself a rigid monk. He lays uncommon stress upon a strictly regulated ascetical life,[5] speaks strongly against the luxury and pride of many monks, their pomp of dress, riches, and the costly architecture of their monasteries. He bestows most praise upon the strictest orders, to wit, the Carthusians and Cistercians,[6] was himself punctual in all exercises, and used the scourge every week. Moderate in all other things,[7] sensible of human weakness,[8] and ever manifesting the innate gentleness of his disposition, he here disapproves of all extravagance and excess. Setting out from the principle,[9] "that all which goes beyond measure and does not keep within its own distinctive limits, can neither please God nor be of long duration," he says,[10] "If you wish to carry through a fixed method of life, you must steer a middle course between two extremes, so as not presumptuously to attempt what is above your ability, nor yet on the other hand,

[1] Hort. Rosar. ix. 1. p. 64.

[2] Epist. 6, p. 178.

[3] "A monk out of his cell is a fish out of the water." Vall. lilior. xviii. 1, p. 89. Compare Exerc. spirit. iv. 3, p. 201.

[4] De Discipl. Claustr. vii. 4, p. 142.

[5] Ibid. v. 2. p. 139; vi. 2. p. 140. The observance of discipline is to him of higher importance than the scientia Scripturarum, which he elsewhere so greatly values. De Discipl. Claustr. i. 2, p. 131

[6] De Imitat. Chr i. 25, 8.

[7] Omnibus adde modum, modus est pulcherrima virtus—says he. Vall lilior. xviii. 4, p. 90.

[8] Sermon. ad Novit. i. 5, p. 15.

[9] De Disciplina Claustral. ix. 2.

[10] Ibid. ix. 1: Si vis stabilem bene videndi ordinem servare, *inter duo extrema, per medium* iter incede.

slothfully to leave undone what you are well able to do. God requires of thee not the destruction of thy body but the vanquishment of thy sins. He demands not what is unprofitable, but what is conducive to thy salvation. He counsels well, and provides the things necessary for thy life, in order that thou mayest make a good use of the body, to advance the welfare of the soul, but in no point to overstep the proper measure of discretion." . . . "It is hence requisite[1] in every spiritual work, in order to finish what you have well begun, to observe the common rule, to avoid singularity,[2] in doubtful and dark points to follow the advice of the superior, and with the due measure of discrimination to yield obedience in all uprightness." In this manner, with temperance in meat and drink, and zeal in ascetic exercises, but without carrying them to an injurious extent, Thomas seems in his own case to have preserved to the last day of his life a healthy state of body and soul, a cheerful disposition, and a fresh and clear eye. It is also in part to be ascribed to the same moderation, that he attained to so unusual an old age; whereas we behold Gerhard, Florentius, and Zerbolt, who, in the heat of conversion, gave themselves up to excessive penances,[3] dying in early life.

We have thus sketched what is most essential in the views of Thomas. The reader may now ask with astonishment, shall this quiet mystic, wholly immersed in the contemplation of divine things, this recluse, obedient, rigidly catholic monk, shall he be placed in the ranks of those *who paved the way for the Reformation?* We boldly answer in the affirmative. Thomas à Kempis was not, indeed, a precursor of the Reformation in the same sense as Wessel and others. He was not one in every respect; But he was so in several very weighty and important aspects, —we may even say with truth,—in the core of his being.

[1] De Disciplina Claustr. ix. 3.

[2] Singularitatis caveas notam. Comp. Sermon. ad Novit. ii. 5, p. 42.

[3] The excess in the asceticism of Florentius Thomas has himself mentioned. Vita Flor. xvii. 1: Corpus suum jejunio et vigiliis rigide *nimis* castigavit.

It is true *Thomas was a strict Catholic*, and directly impugned nothing which had received the sanction of the Church. He adhered strictly to the creed as it had been handed down, and did not assail the doctrines which generally have, and even in those days had, not unfrequently, excited opposition, and chiefly respected indulgences and transubstantiation; but rather expresses distinct assent to the latter.[1] He practised with great zeal the whole divine worship as it then obtained, and which as such appeared to him just what it ought to be, and insists with particular urgency upon what is so characteristically catholic, prayers for the dead offered through the medium of the mass,[2] especially the adoration of the saints, among whom he chiefly worships the patron-saints of his own monastery, and most of all the service of Mary, to whom he ascribes so important a share in the divine government of the world as to say of her, "How could a world, which is so full of sin, endure, unless Mary with the saints in heaven were daily praying for it."[3] He no less acknowledges the existing hierarchy and ecclesiastical constitution in their whole extent, together with the priesthood in its function of mediating between God and man,[4] and at least nowhere lifts his voice against the hierarchical corruptions and their oppressive effects, but on every occasion rather insists upon ecclesiastical obedience as one of the greatest virtues. The authority of the Church, accordingly, is as regards him wholly inviolate. His predominant principle is that of subjection and faith, so that he was disposed rather to bear any thing harsh and unjust, and embrace any thing untrue, as for instance imaginary miracles,[5] than to excite opposition, or exercise criticism, which would have appeared to him in the light of infidel rashness.

It is no less true that the views of Thomas differed from the

[1] De Imit. Chr. iv. 2, 5.

[2] Epistola 5, p. 176—178.

[3] De Discipl. Claustr. cap. xiv.: Nisi enim Maria quotidie, cum Sanctis in coelo, pro mundo oraret: quomodo mundus adhuc stare posset? Comp. Sermon. ad Novit. iii. 4, p. 84.

[4] De Imit. Chr. iv. 5, 3. Ibid. iv. 11, 6.

[5] *E.g.*, Sermon. ad. Novit. iii. 8, p. 104 and 105, p. 107, and elsewhere.

maturer form assumed by those of the Reformation, in many not unimportant points. A taint of the pelagianism of the mediaeval theology manifestly enters into them, especially in those of his writings which are devoted to the delineation and recommendation of the monastic life, in which the notion of merit plays a not unimportant part. Like the generality of mystics, he occupies St John's point of view more than that of St Paul,[1] from which, however, the main impulse towards the Reformation proceeded. To him Christ is more the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth, the image of God, and the pattern of a life in and with God, than the author of atonement and redemption, and the cross more the symbol of self-mortification than the memorial of Christ's sacrificial and mediatory death; and hence not justification by faith, but reconciliation by love, constitutes the centre of his whole religious system. While Luther and men of like mind lay the main stress upon faith, and would hesitate to imperil its interests more than those of love, Thomas lays it upon love, and derives all good from that, and all evil from its opposite. With this principle of love, indeed, he connects, if not the whole legalism of the mediaeval Church, for which he was much too spiritual and free, still a certain measure of the traditional legality, inasmuch as he fences morality of life with a multitude of rules and exercises, and, especially in the case of the monk, subjects it to an outward bondage by no means in accordance with a truly evangelical spirit.

In spite of all this, however, we must maintain that between the childlike, humble Thomas, and the heroic and independent Luther, however diversely their physiognomies may contrast, there is yet a deep inward affinity, and that in the whole character of the former there exist *reformatory* elements in no inconsiderable measure. In proof of this it might be enough to view the matter upon its negative side, and the manner in which he treats religious subjects, although the positive is also of some importance.

Undoubtedly Thomas does not impugn any ecclesiastical

[1] He therefore extols John in preference to the rest of the Apostles. Concio i. de Incarn. Chr. p. 150.

dogma, but neither does he establish or defend any. With the *dogma* as such he does not meddle at all; but animates and enlivens it by his pious feelings. It is from the heart so to speak that he sets it in motion, employing it as the vehicle of his mysticism and aceticism. The interest he takes, however, is not so much in the doctrinal as in the moral. To the strict ecclesiastical orthodoxy of the reigning catholicism, which was substantially represented by scholasticism, especially by Thomas Aquinas, his relation is little different from that in which the pietists stood to the Lutheran orthodoxy, under the scholastic form which it had assumed in the seventeenth century. Just as pietism, although fully adhering to the whole creed of the church, by the preponderating worth it assigned to practice in religion, brought about a certain indifference to strictness and precision of doctrine,—a doctrinal latitudinarianism — which, in the sequel, although contrary to its desire, was transmuted into the rationalistic opposition, so the practical mysticism of the fifteenth century, as exhibited by the Brethren of the Common Lot, the pietists of Catholicism, and especially by Thomas à Kempis, produced a similar effect. The only difference was, that on the overthrow of the creed in the Protestant Church, abstract intellect ascended the throne; whereas, in the other case, the heart of mysticism continued to operate in the new theological creation of the Reformers. Scholasticism and mysticism, as we find them in the fifteen century, had wholly changed their original positions. At first, in the twelfth century, mysticism was pre-eminently the chief defender of the church, as for instance is evinced by Bernard's contest with Abelard; afterwards scholasticism in its principal representatives had entirely devoted itself to the Church's cause, and become, properly speaking, the legitimate theology. This place it occupied in the fifteenth century, whereas on the contrary the elements of opposition were for the most part upon the side of mysticism; And inasmuch as à Kempis also belongs to that side, inasmuch as he is manifestly anti-scholastical, gives prominence solely to the religious and moral import of the dogma, and applies it almost exclusively to the use of the mystical and ascetical life, we must, from a regard to his edifying character, ascribe to him a real, although an indirect, influence in the dissolution of the creed. Another proof of the little interest he

took in the ecclesiastical doctrine is afforded by the circumstance that he never turns his arms against errors in faith. He makes war, not with heretics but with the world. In his eyes sin is the great heresy, and the object of continual hostility. Nor has he the narrow-mindedness necessarily pertaining to a rigid dogmatist of his Church. "Jesus," as he beautifully says,[1] "is not always to be found in the place where we seek him, but is often in the place where we least expect him. *Let no one presume that Christ belongs solely to him.* Let no one despise his neighbour, for he cannot tell how far he may secretly be acceptable to God, although apparently unknown and contemptible in the sight of men. Jesus himself was once unknown to the multitude, and few perceived who and how great he was."

Such was the position of Thomas as a doctrinalist; and similar was that which he occupied with reference to the rites of *religious worship*. Here, also, he was faithful, happy, and conscientious in practising the received forms. But here also it is not the ecclesiastical work itself, the *opus operatum*, which has a value in his eyes, but the disposition with which it is performed, the faith and love which it manifests, and which, in their turn, receive from it nourishment and vigour. It is the all-pervading soul of piety to which he invariably looks, and on which he sets a value. This view he admirably expresses in an opinion respecting the festivals of the Church.[2] "No festival is a festival for me which is not celebrated in the heart, and the only reason for its frequent outward repetition is, that it may be inwardly kept with the greater heartiness and joy. Outward festivals are only a means of incitement to those within, and a foretaste of everlasting joys. . . . . All our festivals are rather preludes to the festival of eternity,[3] than deserving the name of festivals in themselves. Here they are only begun in the light of faith; there, however, they are consummated in the light of glory."

In fine, just as little did he assail *the hierarchy;* In general it is an object of no attention to him. He lets it stand, and passes it

[1] Concio xi. de Christo invento in templo, p. 181, 182.

[2] Concio iv. de Nativitate Christi, p. 162, 163.

[3] In a similar way Doctrinale Juven. ix. 2, p. 216 : Festa Christi et Sanctorum *designant* gaudia coelorum.

by in silence. The whole outward structure of the church is for him as if it had no existence; he cleaves to the living spirit within it, and to that alone. In his numerous writings he does not so much as mention the Pope by name, and only once alludes to him for the purpose of saying, that even he, a mortal man,[1] and his leaden bull, like all earthly objects, are nothing.[2] Had it been his lot ever to hold intercourse with a pope, especially with any of the immoral ones of the fifteenth century, he would, like St Bernard, have exhorted him to repentance, self-denial, and the renunciation of earthly things. The secularization of the Church, so far as he was acquainted with it, must have been to one who had so little of a worldly spirit as Thomas, an abomination. All he did and thought was based upon the saying of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world," and from that point of view he could not but also contemplate the church.[3] Hence he speaks against striving after honours either academical or ecclessiastical,[4] against the wealth of churches and monasteries, simony,[5] plurality of ecclesiastical offices, and the secularities of monachism.[6]

But all this, how opposite soever the spirit it evinces to the prevalent reverence for the church, is rather of a negative character. We have to point to certain particulars more important and positive. In the first place, Thomas everywhere insists upon the Christian principles of spirituality and freedom, which formed the basis of the Reformation. Besides, the spirit of his fraternity led him to do many things involved in the general current which brought about the Reformation. To him the *inward life*, the disposition of mind, is the great matter. No work or

[1] Vallis lilior. xxv. 3, p. 97.

[2] Sapiens est ille, qui spernit millia mille.
Omnia sunt nulla, Rex, *Papa* et *plumbea bulla*.
Cunctorum finis: mors, vermis, fovea, cinis.

See Hortul. Rosar. iv. 3. With which connect Vallis lilior. xxv 3: Nemo unius diei certitudinem vivendi habet, nec impetrare potest a *Papa* bullam nunquam moriendi, nec obtinere pecunia praebendam jugiter manentem etc.

[3] Comp. Concio xxxvi. de sancta conversatione primitivae Ecclesiae, p. 251 and 252.

[4] Epist. iv. p. 175.

[5] Vallis lilior. c. 25.

[6] De Imit. Chr. i. 17, 2. Epist. 6, p. 179.

external thing is of any value except through love. Where there is genuine love, it sanctifies all. In like manner he knows nothing more exalted than *freedom*. Freedom of mind is in his eyes the supreme good in the spiritual life.[1] To be detached from all creatures, dependent only upon God, but in this dependence perfectly master of one's self and of all other things, this is to him the great mark, which the spiritual man ought to strive to reach. It is true that Thomas is not *intentionally* a Reformer, for he does not apply these principles outwardly. But he nevertheless is a Reformer; for he desired the self-same objects as Luther and his friends, the only difference being that the latter also prosecuted them to their outward consequences. But besides, in the spirit of the fraternity of which he was a member, Thomas did many things to pave the way for reform. These consisted chiefly in zealously inculcating the reading of the Bible[2] and the transcription of copies of it, a work in which he himself took an active part,—in laying the chief weight not upon Moses or any sort of law, but upon Christ and his Gospel, upon grace, repentance, faith, love, and the appropriation[3] of the spirit of Scripture by the Spirit of God in the soul,[4]—in labouring much for the religious revival and instruction of the people by sermons and *collationes*,—and in practically evincing a lively concern for the literary, and especially the philological, education of the rising generations. All this included the germs of future evolutions, although the harvest which they bore was such as Thomas never anticipated, and, if foreshewn to him, would scarcely have recognized as the growth of his own seed. We have to observe, that under Thomas's immediate influence a man was trained up in whom we find these germs, developed to a very high degree. We speak of John *Wessel*, whom we are shortly to depict.

[1] Libertas spiritus principale bonum in vita spirituali. Vita Gerh. xviii. 3. Fili, ad istud diligenter attendere debes, ut omni loco et actione sis *intimus liber*, et tui ipsius potens, et *sint omnia sub te, et tu non sub eis*. De Imit. Chr. iii. 28, 1.

[2] Vallis lilior. c. 21, §. 2.

[3] De Imit. Chr. i. 5, 1.

[4] Ibid. iii. 2, 1 sq.

From this account of the principal representatives of the Christian mysticism of the Brethren, we again revert to the history of the Body, chiefly for the purpose of contemplating the remarkable circumstances of its decline, and the effects which survived its extinction.

PART FOURTH.

ATTACKS UPON THE INSTITUTE OF THE COMMON LOT. ITS FALL, AND SUBSEQUENT CONSEQUENCES.

CHAPTER FIRST.

ATTACKS, ESPECIALLY ON THE PART OF THE MENDICANT MONKS.

Side by side with the inward development and outward spread of the Societies, runs a succession of attacks and conflicts, which in the main only promoted the prosperity of the Institute. These attacks proceeded from the clergy; and still more from the mendicant monks. As Gerhard in his day had given offence to the clergy by his discourses, so also did several of his successors. And subsequently, when the Brethren to a great extent abandoned the field of preaching, in order to devote themselves to a life of practical piety and contemplation, and to the education of the people, by means of schools and spiritual direction, they stirred up especially the mendicant monks against them. These parties saw themselves put to shame, by the genuine piety of the Brotherhoods. The education of youth was taken out of their hands; their whole influence over the people weakened, and, as the consequence of all this, their importance and revenues materially diminished. The beau-ideal of a mendicant friar, Brother *Bartholomew*, of the Order of Hermits of St Augustine, was the first to rise up against the new institutions, and not wholly without success. The magis-

trates at Kempen drove the friends and adherents of Gerhard out of their city, and among them Werner *Keyncamp*, the Rector of the school, who was prohibited from entering their jurisdiction for ten years. The intrepid Gerhard Groot wrote to him in the following terms:[1] "I hope you will face with equanimity the danger of losing your temporal substance. The saints did this. Earthly dangers are nothing, when we fix our eyes upon the celestial recompense. Let us rejoice that in some measure we are crucified to the world, or have crucified the world to us. Ours is a just and sacred cause. May it be to some of us the means of obtaining the crown!"

The attacks continued, and were mainly directed against the peculiar position which the Institute of the Common Lot as a whole, occupied towards *monachism*. It will be recollected that the heathen said to the Christians of the first century: You profess a kind of religion, but which is not an actual one, nor founded in history or law. For you adore neither the national God of the Jews, nor yet the Deities we have inherited from our fathers. You are a mongrel-race, a neutral something[2], which ought not properly to be; you have no right to exist.[3] The monks addressed similar language to the Brethren of the Common Lot. "If you live," they said, "according to the rule of any order, and yet do not constitute a true order, you are an equivocal body. The position you occupy is not recognised by law, but ecclesiastically illegitimate. You must abandon it, and enter wholly either into the world or into monachism. You cannot continue to be what you now are." By these and similar allegations, Gerhard *Zerbolt* was induced to compose a special treatise[4] on the manner

[1] The transactions are related in Revii Daventria illustr. p. 31, 32. Comp. Vita Gerh. ix. 1, where we find the following extract from a letter of Gerhard to the priests of Amsterdam, "Do not, my dear friends, permit the insurrection of the men of Kampen against me, to put you in alarm. All will proceed according to the Divine will. The Church in Kampen will undergo a wonderful increase. To God the Most High be all honour and praise! Let mutual love burn between us, not faintly but with power. And let us despise this mire, and to the praise of the Creator, shew ourselves as exemplars of the Most High *(exemplaria altissimi)*."

[2] Genus tertium.

[3] Non licet esse vos.

[4] Extracts from it are given in Daventria illustr. p. 36—40.

of life observed by pious Brotherhoods, in which he explained the relation in which they stood to cloisteral life, and at the same time shewed that the Societies formed neither a new order, nor a college, nor a corporation, and that, least of all, did they deserve the name of forbidden *conventicles*.[1] Conventicles, he says, are clandestine meetings, attended only by conspirators, heretics, or rebels, but of the crimes of such men the Brethren are wholly guiltless. To a corporation or college certain legal forms and institutions necessarily belong, for instance, elected presidents, a syndic, and such like, but these have no place among the Brethren. Just as little do they constitute a new order. An order always rests upon three things, the vow, the rule, and the obedience, which is paid to man in place of God. But of all this we have here nothing. The Brethren merely live together in one house, as Christians did in the days of the Apostles (a comparison not in all respects applicable), who speak of the church in the house. They differ from other people at the most by their simplicity, to which none can object, and not by uniformity of dress, either as respects shape or colour, for every one chooses the dress he thinks best, and changes it as he likes. Community of goods, as practised by the Brethren, and which consists in each freely surrendering to the Society the right to administer and use his property, is wholly unobjectionable, and lawful to laymen no less than to clergymen. Obedience needs not, as in monachism, be paid solely to a superior; but may be practised between equals, such as the Brethren are, one exciting and admonishing another to do what is of itself obligatory. Confession of sin, in so far as it is a sacramental transaction, and accompanied by absolution and penance, cannot be rightfully made except to an ordained priest. In the absence of such a priest, however, and in the case of more venial sins, where moral help and advice are all that are asked, confession, as a free effusion of the heart, may be made even to a layman, for here neither the power of the keys nor yet erudition are requisite, but only the right spirit and

[1] . . . minime autem *conventiculi* nomine hae cohabitationes dicendae sint. And then in the sequel: gravius autem errare, qui *conventiculorum* convicium eis ausint facere, cum conventicula sint conspiratorum, haereticorum, seditiosorum, qualia crimina in sese non agnoscant. Daventr. illustr. p. 37.

experience. Such confession of sin may have a most beneficial moral effect, and for that reason the mutual practice of it has been introduced among the Brethren.[1] Besides, the Brethren have other customs and fixed regulations, but without these no community, no family, no gymnasium, nor institute, can exist at all. All depends on such customs being innocent and praiseworthy. But of that description is manual labour, which the Apostle and the most holy men have recommended both by precept and example. And when the Brethren who are domiciled in one house, pray and labour with each other, rise and go to bed at the same hour, they do no more than is done in all well-regulated families. Nay, in many towns, the tradesmen begin and finish their work at the sound of the public bell, and yet they are not for that reason monks. Consequently, the Brethren of the Common Lot, are neither inwardly nor outwardly, to be considered as a monastic order.

But notwithstanding these exculpatory arguments, the mendicant friars, especially those of the Inquisition, continued in violent hostility to the institution. Even in the fifteenth century they renewed their attacks, and in particular took advantage of the illustrious ecclesiastical Council held at Constance and designed to introduce peace, order, and stability into all departments of the Church's affairs, then greatly disorganized, for the purpose of accomplishing the entire suppression of the Brethren as heretics and rebels against ecclesiastical law. This onset, although really the repetition of the older one in a new direction, is at the same time so remarkable, and so characteristic of the sentiments of the age, as to call for a more particular account. Its peculiarity lies in the circumstance that a debate arose about the *idea of religion*, and its application, such as only could have taken place in the middle ages. The spirit of an age is expressed in its words, and the history of their use is the history of its ideas. This was here the case. The idea of religion had by degrees become so debased, and at the same time reverence for monastic life had risen to such an extravagant pitch, that perfect religion appeared to coincide and to be wholly identical with monkery. Just as at an early period the

[1] Daventr. illustr. p. 39.

promoters of monachism in the East, Gregory of Nazianzen and Basil, had distinguished it exclusively by the honourable title of philosophy, and monks by that of philosophers, so did the enthusiastic reverence of the middle ages denominate monachism, religion; its orders, religions; and their members, the religious. Life in the cloister was the state of perfection, and true religion, and the several orders, the religious denominations or confessions of the middle age. We find this mode of language employed by Salvianus, Presbyter of Marseilles, so early as the fifth century,[1] and of habitual use from that date. In this sense, the 13th canon of the Lateran Council, in the year 1215, under Innocent III., in order to prevent confusion arising from the multiplicity of religions, strictly prohibits any person inventing a new one, that is, instituting a new order. In the same sense, a complaint was also made against the Brethren of the Common Lot, to the effect that they practised all that belonged to a religion, without, however, connecting themselves with any actually existing order,[2] and consequently, that the institute involved a contradiction in its very nature, and ought not to be tolerated in the Church. A preacher monk of the province of Sachsen, in the diocese of Merseburg,[3] by name Matthew *Grabow*, undertook to enforce this charge against them at Constance.[4] Relying on a knowledge of the circumstances which he must have acquired at a former period of his life, when reader in the convent at Groeningen, he presented to Martin V., the new Head of the Church, a bill of complaint, in which he specially pressed the point, that the Brethren observed the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and yet did not belong to any particular order or religion; that this was contrary to all ecclesiastical law, and a mortal sin beyond the power of the Pope himself to forgive, nay, that it involved an essential contradiction, which

[1] *Du Cange* Glossar. med. et inf. Latin. T. iii. p. 633, 634. s.v. religio.

[2] The Brethren objected even to be called *Religiosi*, and those at Deventer would not accept the title of *Canonici*, offered them by Nicolaus of Cusa. Delprat, s. 93.

[3] In Daventr. illustr. p. 67. He is designated as a member of the Conventus Wismariensis.

[4] The transactions in the case may be seen in *von der Hardt* Acta Concil. Const. T. iii. p. 107—121. With which connect Daventr. illustr. p. 67 sqq.

the divine omnipotence could not reconcile. He further alleged that the possession of temporal property belonged essentially to the secular state, as the renunciation of it did to the religious; that whoever meant to practice such renunciation was bound by necessity to connect himself with a true religion, that is, with one which had received the sanction of the Apostolical see; that to do this, and at the same time to remain in the world, was the most manifest contradiction, implying, as it did, that a secular is a religious, and a religious a secular person; that whosoever acts in such a way is the author of an ecclesiastical monstrosity, and a transgressor of the canon law; nay, that inasmuch as he abstracts from himself and his relations the necessary means of subsistence, he is a murderer, and falls by all he does into mortal sin; accordingly, that the Brethren of the Common Lot, with all who patronised them and advocated their cause, were by the very fact excommunicated, and obnoxious to eternal damnation.

This shameful attack was vigorously resisted by *John Gerson*, the most influential speaker in the Council, along with thirteen other distinguished theologians, and he took advantage of the opportunity it afforded him of expressing in the most candid manner the sentiments he entertained respecting the importance of the monastic life, or rather its want of importance. At the call of the Cardinal, Antony of Verona, the great Chancellor of the Paris University, on the 3d of April 1418, delivered his opinion[1] in the following terms: The rule of an order is not the true religion; but the true religion, or *Christianity, is the sole and universal rule of every order*, practised by Jesus Christ himself, and which every one, even without special vow, may and ought to practise; neither does the rule of Christianity require extraneous precepts to perfect it. These are, as Anselm says in his day, merely *factitious religions*. It is mere abuse of language and presumption to call them states of perfection, inasmuch as persons who have least claim to be called perfect, frequently adhere to them, and in many cases find them such a hindrance to well-doing, that they would have done much better to have continued living in the world. If, however, a distinction is to

[1] *Von der Hardt* Acta Concil. Const. T. iii. p. 115. *Gersonii* Opera edit. du Pin. T. i. p. 467—474.

be made in the Christian religion, between two methods of life, the one that of the laity, the other that of those who are called religious, because they are members of the factitious religions, it must not be forgotten that the two are by no means so opposed to each other, as that much that pertains to the religious is not sometimes, in a still higher degree calculated also for laymen. At all events any one, though disconnected with the factitious religions, is able, with or without a vow, perfectly to observe the Christian religion in its precepts and counsels. It follows that the opinion of Brother Matthew is a foolish, unsound, and blasphemous fancy, inasmuch as it excludes not merely prelates who have never taken the monastic vow, but even *Christ himself, from religion.* All that he objects to those who practise poverty, chastity, and obedience apart from the factitious forms of piety, flows from the radical error of supposing monachism to be perfect religion. It is, therefore, necessary that this pernicious doctrine be publicly and formally suppressed, and its author, if he persist in its defence, put under such restraint as may prevent his doing more harm. Peter d'Ailly, Cardinal of Cambray, vigorously supported the noble-minded Gerson upon this occasion, likewise declaring to the Cardinal who was commissioned by the Pope to investigate the matter,[1] that the memorial of the Dominican ought, as heretical, to be committed to the flames, and sentence on the author to be referred to the "gentlemen of the law." The consequence was, that at the close of the Papal commission appointed for their examination, Grabow's bill and doctrine were condemned as contrary to the Christian faith, and the author rescued himself by a recantation of his opinions. By this means the institutions of the Common Lot were recognised afresh by the Pope and Council. The precedent thus given by Martin V. was afterwards followed by other popes, especially by Eugene IV., in a bull of the year 1437,[2] and by Sixtus IV., in one of 1474, by which certain privileges were conceded to the Brethren, as for instance, unrestricted liberty to accept consecration to the priestly and other offices.

[1] *Von der Hardt* Acta Concil. Constant. T. iii. p. 112—115.
[2] Printed in Daventr. illustr. p. 68, 69.

CHAPTER SECOND.

DECLINE OF THE BROTHERHOOD. ITS CAUSES. PARALLEL INSTANCES.

Amidst conflicts of the same description, the institutions of the Brethren spread in a wide circle, and grew to importance and prosperity. We shall here briefly state the *main facts* of their *rise* and *fall*. The members of the Societies, in the vast majority of instances, although not without some exceptions,[1] having at the first led an exemplary life, and the establishments having proved of great and varied utility, they were not merely richly endowed by private parties, but supported by the magistracy of the towns, and even in some measure aided by the ecclesiastical authorities.[2] Public opinion was in a high degree favourable to them. On this point, indeed, the statement of *Erasmus* might incline us to doubt. He considers the Brother-houses merely as establishments in which the young are suppled and prepared, by hard treatment, for a cloisteral life; he denies the competency of their schools to give to youth a truly liberal education, and complains of having himself wasted two years in an institution of the kind.[3] But when we reflect that this is said in a letter keenly hostile to all sorts of monasticism, that, on the contrary, in other passages of his works, he warmly commends the tuition of Hegius and the in-

[1] It happened, for example, that a Brother who was sent to found a school at Liege, gave himself up to gaming and drunkenness, and became a corrupter of the young. For this reason the whole institution was soon, in the year 1428, again abolished by the bishop. Delprat, s. 69.

[2] In Utrecht the Brethren at their settlement, were presented by the city with a house, 300 Rhenish guilders, a saffron-coloured priestly robe, and a gilded silver cup. The Episcopal vicar likewise shewed himself no less favourable. Delprat, p. 62. In like manner, the bishop of Utrecht, Frederick of Blankenheim, is praised by Thomas à Kempis as omnium devotorum patronus pius et gloriosus. Vita Jo. Binkerink sect. 7.

[3] Epist. ad Lamb. Grunnium, in append. Epist. ed. Clerici, ep. CDXLII. col. 1821 and 22. Delprat s. 96 and 108.

fluence exercised by Sintius upon him,[1] that he fully acknowledges the free and unconstrained Christian character of the association of the Brethren, and even laments that he had not fully connected himself with one of their Fraternities;[2] when at the same time we reflect that Erasmus had not the least susceptibility for that practical mysticism which constituted the deeper foundation of the Society, and was even decidedly averse to asceticism, the evil with which he charges them is reduced to almost nothing, or at the most, only shews, that at a later period, towards the end of the 15th century, their schools had not in every instance kept pace with the rapid progress of education, and that in several of them the system was greatly insufficient. But, however that may be, the unfavourable testimony of Erasmus is fully counterbalanced by the approval and sympathy which Gerson in the 15th century, and Luther and Melancthon,[3] even so late as the 16th, bestow upon the Societies.

In reference to the general condition of the Institute, we must distinguish times. The labours of the Brethren comprehend a period of almost two centuries. Their season of *greatest prosperity* extends from the beginning of the 15th to that of the 16th century. In this interval they manifested a fresh religious spirit, imparted a mighty impulse to the people, enlivened and unmistakably improved the system of education. A reformatory council entered the lists in their defence. Popes of great name, such as Martin V., Eugene IV., and Pius II., shewed them favour. Influential dignitaries of the church, like Cardinal Cusa,[4] patronised them. The people and the youth, the one impelled by the desire of improvement, the other by a thirst of knowledge, flocked to them from all quarters. In this interval too, and chiefly between 1425 and 1451, the greatest number of Brother-houses were built. In the Netherlands, besides their first establishments at Deventer, Zwoll, and Windesem, we

[1] In his autobiography he says: Daventriae primum cepi odorem melioris doctrinae ex pueris collusoribus, qui audiebant Zinthium.

[2] See the passages in Delprat, p. 109. Annot.

[3] With respect to Gerson see the above-cited passages. Luther and Melanchthon's testimonies will appear in the sequel.

[4] *Dumbar* Analect. i. 173. Delprat s. 82 and 91. Nicolaus of Cusa was himself a pupil of the school of Deventer.

find them principally at Amersford, Hoorn, Delft, Hattem, Herzogenbusch, Groeningen, Gouda, Harderwijk, Utrecht, Brussels, Antwerp, Louvain, Ghent, Grammont, Nimwegen, and Doesburg; and out of the Netherlands, in Emmerich, Munster, Cologne, Niederwesel, Osnabruck, Hildesheim, Herford, Rostock, and Culm.[1] Nay, they extended their settlements up the Rhine the length of Swabia,[2] and into the centre of Germany as far as Merseburg.[3] In the course of the 16th century, their establishments were visibly on the wane. The last Brother-house was erected at Cambray in 1505, but it went down at no later a date than 1554.[4] In 1579 only three students were boarded for 32—33 gold guilders,[5] in the once so celebrated house at Zwoll. In 1575, Henry Arsenius, the last member of the Brother-house, died at Rostock, a man of piety and classical education, and universally respected, in whom, as in a fine portrait, the spirit of the Brotherhood, before it sank into the grave, was once more displayed.[6] Only a very few of their establishments, of which Munster is an instance, survived to the 17th century,[7] like the ruins of an age that had long passed away.

The institution could make its exit with honour; it had fulfilled its destination; and all that now claims our attention is to mark the *causes of its decline.* External assaults were not the cause of its ruin. It crumbled to pieces of itself in the new religious and intellectual development undergone by the age. Having formerly attained to greatness by successfully satisfying

[1] For a detailed description and history of the several fraternities see Delprat, s. 12—87.

[2] Pfister Eberhard in Bart, s. 216. Eberhard [died as Duke of Würtemberg in 1496], employed the Brethren of the Common Lot for the improvement of the clergy, especially in the monasteries Urach and Sindelfingen. Cless, Versuch einer kirchl. Gesch. Würtembergs vor der Reformation s. 271.

[3] Delprat, s. 80. In North Germany the Societies extended, especially towards the end of the 15th century. In this quarter, however, they never acquired the same influence as in the Netherlands, and had neither so great teachers nor so distinguished scholars to boast of. In Culm they had great conflicts with the Prussian clergy. Delprat, s. 77.

[4] Ibid. s. 71.

[5] Ibid. s. 36.

[6] Respecting him see Mohnike zu Delprat, Anhang Nro. 4. 172 and the citations.

[7] Delprat, s. 76.

the deeper wants of contemporaries, it now perished, because, outstripped by the age, it was compelled to resign that task into other hands. To contemplate the details of this process is instructive, and closely connected with our object.

To begin with one of the most external particulars, the main occupation of the Brethren, as has been repeatedly mentioned, was copying books. But on the invention and spread of *printing*, which effected the object with so much greater economy[1] and expedition, this occupation lost all its importance, and the effect ensued with all the more certainty, that the new invention, in the first stage of its progress, was vigorously applied to the same objects as those on which the Brethren had hitherto exercised their active pens—viz., the Sacred Scriptures, works on theology, and school-books. The immediate effect, indeed, was, that the Brethren appropriated to themselves the new invention. While the presses of Gutenberg, Faust, and Schoeffer in Mayence and Eltwill, were worked with ever-increasing success, the Brethren in Maryvale (Mergenthal), near Geissenheim in the Rhinegau, who had hitherto done little else than copy books, also procured for themselves a printing-press, probably as early as 1468, but certainly about 1474.[2] In like manner printing offices were set up in the Brother-houses at Herzogenbusch, Gouda, Louvain, Rostock, and Convent-Hem near Schoonhoven.[3] We may add, that Jodocus Badius Ascensius, one of the earliest and most eminent Parisian printers, who reaped great merit from his excellent editions of the ancient classics, received his education in one of the schools of the Brethren.[4] But the new art soon spread so mightily over all

[1] Let the reader judge of the difference from the following fact. About the year 1458, and by order of Dean Herm. Droem, Jac. Enkhuysen wrote a Bible, which is still to be found in St Mary's Church at Utrecht, and charged for it 500 *gold guilders*. Kist und Royaard's Kirchenh. Arch. vi. 300.

[2] Schaab Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst, Mainz 1831. Th. iii. s. 358.

[3] Delprat, s 49, 52, 54, 70, 77, 85, 144. Respecting the printing of the Brethren at Rostock, see in particular the learned work G. C. F. Lisch Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst in Meklenburg bis z. J. 1540. Schwerin 1839, and extracts from it by Mohnike in the Appendix to Delprat, nro. 4 s. 170 sq.

[4] He was called Ascensius from Asche near Brussels, where he was born (in the year 1462). Respecting his typographical labours, see Delprat, s. 52.

civilized countries, that the most which the Brethren with their slender means could accomplish, was comparatively trifling. Hitherto, as transcribers, they had enjoyed almost a monopoly of gain. Now, they were lost like a drop in the mighty flood, which in the 16th century had already swelled to such a height.

Another of the meritorious services of the Brethren was *the education of the young*. They founded many schools where previously there had been none. By the substitution of a better instruction, they supplanted that of the monks. They assisted innumerable youths in their studies, and trained not a few excellent teachers. In this respect also, however, they were in a manner superseded by the progress of general knowledge. Their best scholars, on attaining to manhood, like Alexander *Hegius*, Herman von *Busche*, Louis *Dringenberg*, and others, set up schools of their own. And as in these institutions the circle of polite learning was made to embrace a wider range and greater variety, than was the case among the Brethren, who still occupied a narrow and ascetically-restricted position, they soon attracted all the best talents, and the schools of the Brethren were more and more forsaken. To this was superadded the new impulse communicated from Italy in favour of classical, and especially Grecian, literature. The place where the two educational elements, emanating, the one from the Netherlands, and the other from beyond the Alps, met, and by being transfused into each other, formed a new, liberal, and truly classic system of instruction, was not in the first instance Holland, but the country which thenceforth became, for scientific culture, the heart of Europe—viz., *Germany*. Hither also the most eminent men from the Netherlands, such as Louis *Dringenberg*, Rudolph *Agricola*, and Desiderius *Erasmus*, resorted;[1] and here, at schools and universities, under the co-operation of the best talents of Germany itself, the study of language and antiquities put forth a blossom which far outshone the highest achievements of the Brethren. Under these circumstances, their establishments, in order to preserve their existence, had no resource but simply to transform themselves, or allow themselves to be transformed, into such educa-

[1] Dringenberg founded a flourishing school at Schlettstadt, Agricola laboured at Heidelberg, Erasmus, as is well known, chiefly at Basle and at Freiburg in the Breisgau.

tional seminaries as were now established over the whole of Germany and Holland.[1]

A third benefit which we owe to the Brethren, was introducing *the mother tongue* into the religious domain. Their claim to peculiar merit, on this score, however, also ceased the moment the practice became general. Contemporaneously with Groot, *Tauler* had likewise preached in German. Other mystics and men of the people followed the example, among whom *Geiler of Kaysersberg* attained to great celebrity as a German preacher. About the same time, religious treatises, chiefly of a mystical character, such as the *Deutsche Theologie*, and others, were written in the mother tongue, and attempts made at translating the Bible.[2] But when Luther at last put the crown upon all these efforts, and the Reformation opened up a free course for the mother tongue, the work which the Brethren had commenced upon a small scale, was completed upon a large; and they could now modestly retire from the stage.

But that which most effectually forced them from their position was the *Reformation*, for by it all that was really good in their endeavours received a higher intellectual completion, while all that was narrow-minded and particular, necessarily fell away of itself. In reference to the Reformation, the Brethren occupied a middle position. On the one hand, they were good churchmen; while, on the other, they fostered in their bosoms the Reformatory elements. This was practicable so long as the hour of decision had not yet struck. But when Luther brought things to a crisis, a preparatory state like theirs, embracing at one and the same time Catholic, and, in embryo, Protestant principles, was no longer tenable, and grew all the less so the more the breach became open and irremediable. The Brotherhouses were compelled either to become formally Catholic monasteries, or to dissolve themselves into the Protestant communion, if not allowed quietly to die out. It is true, that Luther himself was in this respect very equitable, and we possess many highly remarkable statements made by him on the subject, which at the same time bear a noble testimony

[1] Delprat s. 67, 73.

[2] See Panzer's liter. Nachrichten von den allerältesten gedruckten deutschen Bibeln, Nürnberg 1778; and other writings, Gieseler K. Gesch. ii. 4, s. 349. Note n.

to the spirit of the Brotherhoods, even at this advanced period. When in 1531, or at the very commencement of the ensuing year, the Council of Herford in Westphalia proposed to abolish the Sister-and Brother-houses of the place, his intercession was bespoken by the Brethren, and he keenly opposed the measure. Among other things he says, in a letter[1] to the Burgomaster and Council, "Inasmuch as the Brethren and Sisters were the first to begin *the Gospel* among you, lead a creditable life, have a decent and well-behaved congregation, and at the same time faithfully teach and hold the *pure* word, may I affectionately entreat your worships not to permit any dispeace or molestation to befall them, on account of their still wearing the religious dress, and observing old and laudable usages[2] not contrary to the Gospel. For such monasteries and Brother-houses please me beyond measure. Would to God that all monastic institutions were like them! Clergymen, cities, and countries, would then be better served, and more prosperous than they now are." To the same effect he expresses himself[3] to the Rectors of the Brother-house, Jacob Montanus, from Spires, and Gerhard Viscampius, from Xantes, "I dare not indulge," he says, "great wishes; but if all other things were in as good condition as the Brother-houses, the church would be much too blessed even in this present life. Your dress and other commendable usages do not injure the Gospel, but are rather of advantage to it, assailed as in these days it is by the reckless and unbridled *spirits who know only how to destroy, but not to build up*."[4] At a somewhat posterior date, Luther, in his own and Melancthon's name, again delivers the same sentiments in a letter to the College of the Nine-men at Herford,[5] and to the Brethren themselves,[6] to whom, in order to take away all ground for evil-speaking, he returned, with an expression of thanks, the two gold pieces which they had sent him. Nay, in

[1] Of the 31st Jan. 1532. Nro. 1432. Th. 4, s. 333 in de Wette.

[2] Laudabiles consuetudines, was the name given by the Brethren to their precepts.

[3] In the letter, p. 334, which immediately follows.

[4] Contra furiosos et licentiosos et indisciplinatos spiritus, qui hodie nihil nisi destruere et nihil aedificare didicerunt.

[5] In April 1532. Epist. 1448, Th. 4, s. 358 in de Wette.

[6] In the subsequent letter, p. 360.

the year 1534, he a third time interposed for these Brethren,[1] urgently reiterating his solicitation that they should not be troubled or molested, and again bestowing the highest commendation upon the Institute, "because, under the *liberty* and *grace of Christ*, they had charitably ministered and been useful to many." But, notwithstanding these just and beautiful sentiments of Luther, the nature of the case involved that, as the Reformation progressed, the Brethren should choose one or other of the two sides. Even if the Reformers had not forced them to take this step, the Catholic Church, especially the *Order of Jesuits*, from the time of its institution, must have done so. We hence see that part of the Brethren embraced the Reformation,[2] a step which sooner or later led to their dissolution, or, if not, that they were obliged to yield to the Jesuits, who partly expelled them from their establishments, and partly compelled them to embrace the usual monastic discipline, and thereby renounce their peculiar characteristics.[3] In this issue, however, nothing essential was lost, for all the good at which the Brethren aimed, had been transferred into the general civilization of the age, and the spirit of apostolical, free, earnest, popular, and practical piety had found representatives, who far excelled Gerhard, Florentius, and Thomas. It had formed a society which rose above the narrow limits of a Brother-house to the liberty, height, and comprehensive greatness of a Church.

If here, at the close, we take a retrospect of the subject, the communities of Gerhard, as a whole, present a phenomenon with a multitude of aspects. Like all human things truly excellent and great, the institute has its roots struck deeply into the past, while, at the same time, it looks prophetically into the future. Resting on the foundation of apostolical antiquity, it is a peak gilded with the first morning rays in the dawn which precedes the Reformation. If we look back into history, it reminds us, by multifarious, but still unmistakeable *traits of relationship*, of the Societies of the Pythagoreans and Essenes, of the Mother Church at Jerusalem, and of the nobler sort of monastic life, but especially of the spirit of the earlier Benedictines and their industry in

[1] Two letters of the 24th October 1534, to the Council at Herford and to Gerh. Viscampius Nro. 1606 and 1607, Th. 4, s. 560—562 in de Wette.

[2] Delprat s. 78, 79, 91.

[3] Ibid. s. 73, 76, 91.

diffusing the study of letters. If, however, we look forward, the endeavours and institutions of the Society remind us of the Pietists and the Moravian Brethren, of the exertions, made at the period of the Reformation and in more recent times, for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, of the labours of various associations for improving the education of the young, and the Christian training of the people, nay, even of modern societies for purposes of practical philanthropy.

Among all of these, however, it is *Pietism*, with its intellectual tendencies, social unions, and charitable institutions, which presents the most numerous *analogies* to the institute of the *Common Lot;* and next to that the *Moravian Brethren.* And it will reward the trouble to draw more distinctly the parallels to which we have already alluded as existing between them. The Brotherhood of the Common Lot is the Pietism of the 14th and 15th centuries, but tinged with the peculiarities of the age, and fashioned into that shape under which alone such a tendency could be evolved upon the ground of the Catholic Church of the middle ages. Hence proceeds their agreement in essentials, and at the same time their numerous diversities in configuration and appearance.

If we designate *Pietism* as that tendency and social modification of Christianity within the Evangelical Church, which, without any material deviation from the fundamental doctrines of its creed, but resting on the Bible, and bringing it prominently forward, labours to recover the Church from a state of excessive zeal and rigour on doctrinal points, but of indifference and laxity in morals, to genuine and apostolical piety of heart, and to infuse into it new moral vigour, and finding among the generality of the members little susceptibility for any such improvement, assumes to itself all the more the form of a confederation, acts on the general vocation of Christians to the priestly office, adopts as a special task the fostering and spread of vital Christianity, and where it fails to convert the world to its sentiments, more and more shuts itself up in its own peculiarities,—all these are characteristics, which, with a few variations, we likewise find among the Brethren. Adhering to the Catholic creed, they released it from its strictness and rigour by regarding it more in its moral aspects and inward importance for piety, than according to its importance for knowledge. By this preference of the

practical, however, they, like the pietists, abstracted largely from its precision and weight. At the same time they were not the less forward in laying a Scriptural and apostolical foundation for their system, and shewed the liveliest zeal in the study of the Bible, and in its circulation and use among the people. Their aim was to diffuse life into the Church, from the centre of an earnest and Christian piety of heart, and for this purpose they addressed themselves to the people and to the young, expecting to find among them most susceptibility and success. Like the pietists, they shewed great freshness and popularity in their labours as preachers, and as teachers, a no less spirited mode of tuition. Moreover, as they beheld the world lying in wickedness, they insisted on the renunciation of it, on thorough conversion, efficacious repentance, and deep and lasting contrition, and for the purpose of producing and confirming these sentiments prescribed a definite plan which consisted, among the pietists, of an inward ascetism, but owing to the circumstances of the times, was, among the Brethren, more of an outward kind; and in both cases tended to a certain religious methodism. To produce the effects they had in view, they were not satisfied with the ordinary ecclesiastical means which had certainly become insufficient, but, like pietism in its day, had recourse to prayer meetings, the circulation of pious tracts, and private intercourse with the laity, upon whom they endeavoured to exert an influence by conversation and the direction of the conscience. At the same time, amidst these strenuous outward exertions, they withdrew within themselves, and in opposition to the corrupt world, formed a confederation, which among pious persons of the 14th and 15th century, owing to the circumstances of the time, necessarily possessed more of the character of a corporation, with distinctive outward marks, than was the case with those of the 17th and 18th centuries. In one respect, however, they both agree, viz., the predominating interest they respectively felt for their own particular association; in the subjective satisfaction they derived from which, their sympathy for general objects, for Church and state, science, art, and the objective educational powers of humanity, more or less disappeared; until in despair of mastering the sciences and arts, and infusing into them their own peculiar spirit, they passed them by with indifference or rejected them with displeasure. In every association of the kind, which is in any

respect exclusive, and makes piety an occupation, along with the particular views entertained of things, a peculiar language and manner in religion are sure to be formed. This happened with the Brethren, as it also did with the pietists. Both of them possess, although in different ways, a fixed type of expression, which with all his excellence in other respects, is evinced by Thomas à Kempis in stated and ever-recurring forms.[1] Nay, the agreement extends even to their outward institutions. The charitable establishments of Franke in Halle have a manifest similitude to the Brother-house at Daventer, and indeed to all the rest, for the circumstance that at the Orphan-Hospital at Halle, the energy of pietism concentrated itself on a great scale in one point, whereas the Brother-houses were spread over vast countries, makes here no essential difference. The respective establishments, generated by a spirit of living faith and practical charity, were in the main point directed to the self-same end. In both there was developed a peculiar family-spirit which, especially in the creative youth of the Institute, animated all the members, and fused them into a living body, so that even those who filled the humbler offices of servants, had a spiritual importance, as independent and free members of the whole. Just as in Halle the excellent Elers,[2] by the skill with which he founded the printing establishment in the Orphan Hospital, not only became the author of a highly important mercantile enterprise, but in the sphere of his business as a bookseller, manifested himself to be a second Franke, so likewise were the persons, who in the house of Gerhard and Florentius followed the employment of copyists, then the substitute for bookselling, animated by a higher spirit. Nay, this spirit reigned even to the humblest servant of the establishment, of which we have a most illustrious example in John Cacabus, usually called Ketel, the cook in the house of Florentius, a man who resigned a situation of considerable

[1] In his language, especially the words Compunctio (contritio) compungi, compunctivus, humilitas, internitas, with others of the kind, are statedly used. Thomas à Kempis has also written a special treatise: de vera Compunctione, p. 219—225. The idea of the matter is here less illustrated than presupposed. Thomas himself says: "It is better to feel contrition than to understand the definition of it." De Imit. Chr. i. 1, 3.

[2] Compare the beautiful sketch of this man by Knapp, in the work: Leben und Charaktere einiger glehrten und frommen Männer des vorigen Jahrhunderts Halle 1829, s. 177—203.

importance in society and the prospect of priestly ordination, in order to devote himself to the service of the Brethren, and introduce the spirit of Christian piety even into the most secular occupation. By this conduct he raised himself so high in the estimation of Thomas à Kempis, as to be deemed worthy of a biographical portraiture.[1]

In this agreement, both in the general and the details, we must not indeed overlook the *differences* between the two. Pietism was developed upon the foundation of an ecclesiastical body, which had made the doctrine of justification by faith the centre of their convictions. Its tendency was directed to meet the narrowness and doctrinal induration of that Protestant principle, and obviate its actual or possible abuses. Accordingly, along with the receptive, it insisted upon the active property of faith, the diligence in working necessarily inherent in it. In other respects it made no change in the Protestant system, but only brought into the foreground certain fundamental doctrines, such as the total depravity of human nature, the meritoriousness of Christ, and particularly the virtue of his blood, and as a consequence of laying a stronger emphasis upon man's natural inability, also looked upon renewal through grace, that is, regeneration, more as a gradual issue, than as an effect violently and suddenly accomplished with penitential pangs. The Brotherhood of the Common Lot, on the contrary, was formed upon the ground of a Church essentially legal. They did not so much enforce a faith working by love, in antithesis to one merely dogmatical, but rather enforced the principle of love itself in opposition to the law. Long before their time, however, the doctrine of Christian love, along with that of the law and the scholastic dogmatism of the middle ages, had been reduced into a system, viz., Mysticism. This system the Brethren embraced. They accordingly possessed a doctrine and method of teaching of their own, whereas pietism was merely a peculiarly coloured modification of a doctrine of the Church. But *mysticism*, however frequently the unthinking may confound them, is something entirely different from *pietism*.[2] While the latter

[1] Vita Joannis Cacabi, vulgo Ketel, qui coquus fuit. The tenth among the Biographies of the Brethren, p. 99—108.

[2] Some excellent observations, which may be here compared, are contained in Kliefoth Einleitung in die Dogmengesch. s. 245.

lays the stress upon sin more than everything else, viewing it as apostacy, and almost never rising above the consciousness of it, mysticism, without absolutely denying, does not by any means bring it so prominently forward, and derives it generally from the finitude of the created being, and his state of extrusion out of God, more than from his voluntary act and connection with a race. It consequently knows nothing of the pietists' conquest of nature by grace, or of the pains of repentance, but all the more of casting off the creature, individuality, and self, and of attaining to union with God. In the room of *conversion to*, it puts *return into* God, and views this return not as a sudden emergence, but as an evolution in regular and ever-ascending stages, a continual ceasing to be what man of himself is, and an ever more and more complete identification of his nature with God's; in short, as a *deification*, by virtue of which, even in this present life, sin may be wholly vanquished, and the pure vision and blissful fruition of God and of Divine knowledge, may be attained. Mysticism is bolder and more productive, possesses greater intrinsic riches and outward variety than pietism. It is also, however, in many of its forms, more transcendental and sensuous, and less pure and practical. Inasmuch, then, as the mysticism of the Brethren was on the whole of a sober and practical kind, animated by an active and purely Christian spirit, it no doubt approximated closely to pietism, which in some of its modifications, and wit hcertain of its professors, had imbibed various mystical elements. Even as mysticism, however, it is distinguished from the pietists' mode of thinking. For the whole theory of the Brethren is always based upon a doctrine foreign to pietism, the doctrine of union with God brought about by a slow and gradual annihilation of the creature and of self, in which Christ is viewed more as a pattern and quickening principle than as a Redeemer, and his merit is so far from being exclusively enforced, that in virtue of union with God, effected according to the pattern of Christ, a surplus of merit remains over to the subject himself.

Pietism, being more a peculiar tendency and tone of mind than an independent doctrine, manifests itself by fewer external marks. It produces affectionate spiritual association, active cooperation, and a more or less striking impression of its sentiments upon the life, but without fixed rules or distinct segregation.

The Brethren, on the contrary, professing a peculiar doctrine, and that a doctrine which had already led to the formation of other fellowships—for there were many mystical associations in the middle ages—constituted a *close corporation* (in this particular reminding us more of the Moravians and their societies), united by external bonds, and according to the custom of the age, distinguished by their dress and rule of life. Inasmuch, however, as their doctrine, although not strictly ecclesiastical, was yet ecclesiastically tolerated, they were not attacked by any class of the Church except the Mendicant monks: Whereas pietism, although only a particular tendency based upon the Church's doctrine, still, in consequence of modifying its fundamental doctrinal principle, and even changing in general the prevailing dogmatism, appeared so threatening to legitimate orthodoxy, as to sustain from it an assault which ultimately led to a spiritual schism in the Evangelical Church.

The Brethren of the Common Lot were, equally with the pietists, incessantly active in spreading their convictions, and promoting the interests of their Society. Trained, however, in their youth to the utmost modesty and simplicity, they confined their religious operations almost wholly to the class of citizens and the common people, and entertained a certain dislike to persons of rank and consequence. Even in science they remained within a narrow circle, and contented themselves with popular schools and preparatory seminaries of learning. Pietism, on the contrary, from the very first aspired to high things, sought distinguished connections and influence, founded a university of its own, and soon began to think of what, under their circumstances and relations, never could possibly occur to the Brethren, the conversion of distant heathen nations. Pietism expanded, the Brethren concentrated themselves. But in virtue of this very earnestness and concentration, which were connected with their mysticism, they possessed high importance for the development of the future.

Pietism had, and still has, more weight as a reaction than as a new creation. It brought to the Church a needful complement for what it had neglected, and permitted to be neglected; but as a whole, it has produced and moulded nothing of its own. It has a right against the Church, when the Church in any way

shuts itself against that which is Christian. But, by its very nature, it must resolve itself into the Church, as soon as the Church more largely answers the true and Christian ends which pietism involves or seeks after. The Brotherhood of the Common Lot, on the contrary, was more pregnant of the future. It carried in its bosom, as we have seen, various positive elements of a reconstruction and renovation of the Church, and although its tendency also disappeared at and with the Reformation, still in that event it prolonged itself on the grandest scale.

Both phenomena have a certain measure of narrow-mindedness and particularity, a spirit of separatism and subjectivity, which must have prevented their rising to a great whole, and becoming a free, universal, and widely-ramified society. Movements which, desparing of imbuing art and science with their spirit, rather withdraw from, or set themselves in opposition to them, which incline to transform the world into a cloister, or the Church into a conventicle, can have no vocation to an enduring and comprehensive dominion. In virtue of some misapprehended good which they involve, they may operate excellently as a ferment. At any rate, however, their particularism is not to be overcome by the denial or exclusion of that good, or by a mere hostile opposition to their efforts. This can only be done by transferring the good they contain into the great ecclesiastical community, and fostering it there in a better and more effectual way. Such was nearly the relation in which Luther placed himself towards the Brethren of the Common Lot. He acknowledges—and this is the most satisfactory testimony, were such required, of their *Reforming* character—that they had faithfully kept the pure Word, and first introduced the Gospel. He is of opinion that all countries would be well provided if their monasteries were of the same character as the Brother-houses, and he praises the Brethren for knowing how to build up and not merely to destroy. With all this, however, he did not set about erecting Brother-houses, nor enrol himself a member of them, but casting off the monastic dress, transplanted their good spirit, combined with many other essentially Christian elements, into the great fellowship of a new Church—a notable hint of what Luther would have done with respect to pietism had he lived to see its day.

PART FIFTH.

RAMIFICATIONS OF MYSTICISM IN GERMANY UNTIL THE REFORMATION.

We have traced the Brethren of the Common Lot down to the period at which they perished in the Reformation, or rather with their best efforts, were absorbed by it. We turn back once more for the purpose of contemplating from a point already indicated, an equally important series of evolutions which conducts, by a different way, to the same issue.

Apart from the general excitement of the religious spirit, there were mainly two things which proceeded as permanent effects from the Institute of the Brethren, viz., establishing the study of polite literature, and spiritualising Christian faith and life, by means of a refined practical mysticism. These two tendencies, in which, partly from their origin, and partly in virtue of the impression made upon them by the circumstances of the age, a bias to fraternisation was constantly evinced—for the students of classical literature had then their societies and leagues no less than the mystics—extended themselves likewise in a most influential way to Germany, the Mystical in the course of the 14th and 15th centuries, and the Classical from the close of the latter. Being mainly concerned to understand how the Reformation was practically furthered by the people, we direct our attention, first and exclusively, to *Mysticism*, which was of deeply penetrative

efficacy, not merely in a general way, by rendering the Reformation possible, but more particularly in imparting to Luther his peculiar Christian character, and making him, as he was, a Reformer from the heart outwards.

The trunk of Ruysbroek's mysticism, in which the contemplative and the practical were combined, split, as we before remarked, into two branches, through the instrumentality of men of different styles of mind, over whom he exerted a special influence. Through Gerhard Groot, the practical was propagated in the Netherlands; through Tauler, the contemplative and spiritual in Germany. From this period, that is, from the middle of the 14th century, we find in Germany a continuous chain of traditional mysticism reaching close to the Reformation, and by means of its most distinguished productions, the Works of Tauler, and the book called *Deutsche Theologie*, as well as by the personal qualities of John Staupitz, exerting upon Luther himself the greatest influence. To this quarter, therefore, we now turn our eyes.

The general character and result of this *German mysticism*, is that it transplants Christianity from the intellect into the heart, from speculation into sentiment, from the school into life,—that, apprehending its substance more simply, morally, and energetically, and presenting it in a German dress, it converts it into a popular cause,—that waging direct or indirect warfare with the Romish ecclesiastical and scholastic system, it restores a spiritual and free Christianity, more congenial with the German taste and mind, and by this means, on a large and general scale, paves the way for the emancipation both of faith, and in matters of faith, of the nation, from the tyranny of Romanism. This fundamental tendency, while continuing substantially the same, displays great diversities of form. Of these we distinguish four, as the principal, though we are sensible that the one often overflows into the other, and that here we can speak only of their more prominent features. The four are the poetical, the sentimental, the speculative, and the practical mysticism of Germany. Each of them is represented by a distinguished personage or production, the first by *Suso*, the second by *Tauler*, the third by the author of the "*German theology*," the fourth by *Staupitz*. Other men of congenial mind stand side by

side with these. In these, however, the various tendencies are so clearly and distinctly expressed, that a satisfactory view will be obtained by confining our attention exclusively to them.

Suso and Tauler are exact contemporaries, the latter having, in 1361, predeceased the former, who died in 1365.[1] As the order of time is here of less importance than that of facts, we begin with Suso. The poetical freshness, vivacity, and versatility of his mind, place him more in the youthful period of fancy, the middle ages properly so called; whereas, notwithstanding his charming poetry, Tauler by a more profound and earnest concentration of feeling, paves the way for a higher and riper manhood, and decidedly conducts us into that new age, which after being still further helped forward by speculative and practical mysticism, dawns at last in the Reformation.

CHAPTER FIRST.

POETICAL MYSTICISM. HENRY SUSO.

In *Suso*, we form acquaintance with a mystic of a very different description from those presented to us in the circle of the Brethren of the Common Lot. Compared with *Thomas à Kempis*, he displays a complete agreement, no doubt, in fundamental principles, but at the same time a decided contrast in respect both of natural endowments, and the style in which he exhibited the mystical doctrines. It is true that, in common with all the mediaeval mystics, he looks upon oneness with God, attained by means of the annihilation of self, as the summit of all perfection. He, too, finds the union of the soul with God only upon the way of austere bodily exercise, deep inward trials, calm retirement, and the entire absorption of the mind in the contemplation of divine things. At the same time, he is a man of the most lively and susceptible temperament, and feels himself constantly driven to

[1] It is true that some assign a later date to the death of Suso, and postpone it for two decennia; still, Tauler and he must nevertheless have been contemporaries.

escape from the confinement of the cloisteral walls, and step forth into life, that he may receive its impressions, and re-act upon it in all directions. Alive to nature, whose simple and everlasting charms he paints in the most delightful words, and whose vernal resurrection he used annually to celebrate in a "spiritual hymn;"[1] susceptible of the beauty of forms and sounds, for he delights to contemplate his thoughts in the external dress of figurative representation,[2] decorates for himself a secret chapel with pictures,[3] and in moments of transport perceives what moves him, in various ways, as "a sweet sound"[4] and an inward music in the soul; not averse to science, especially to philosophy, for which he has a secret craving, and continually excited by the objects and aspects of the surrounding world, which become to him ever new images of the Most High and matter for the exercise of his love, he resembles a fountain which, although springing in silence and concealment, and ever and anon collecting its waters in its dark abyss, has, at the same time, an irresistible bias to break forth into the light and become a stream, reflecting upon its surface all visible things on the earth and in the heavens, and refreshing, enlivening, and fertilizing whatever it meets in its course.

Of *Suso's* outward *life*[5] we know little. On the other hand,

[1] Leben Suso's durch Elsb. Stäglin K. 14, s. 34.

[2] Ibid. K. 37, s. 122.

[3] Ibid. K. 22, s. 67; K. 37, s. 122, 123. The secret chapel of Suso was in the preachers' cloister at Constance, beside the choir, and under the staircase which leads to the upper church. So Murer says, who had himself seen the locality, Helvet. sancta p. 329.

[4] E.g. Leben Suso's K. 13, s. 32, and in many other passages.

[5] Compare on this subject above all, Heinrich *Suso's Leben* von ihm selbst erzählt, written by Elizabeth Staeglin, in the Ausgabe der *Schriften* Suso's von Melch. *Diepenbrock* Regensb. 1829, s. 1—236. Then: Heinr. *Murer* Helvetia sancta p. 315 sqq. *J. Quétif* et *J. Echard*, Auctores Ord. Praedicat. Paris 1719, T. 1. p. 654 sqq. (The article upon Suso is by Echard.) *Miraeus* Auctar. ad Trith. c. 432, p. 80. *Vita Susonis* in the Latin edition of Suso's Werken per Laur. *Surium*, Colon. 1555, p. 435 sqq. *Cave* Hist. lit. ad. ann. 1290, p. 752. *Bzovius* in Contin. Annal. Baron. T. xiv. ad ann. 1337 Nro. 15 et ad ann. 1365 Nro. 14. *Oudinus* Commentar. de Script. eccl. T. iii. p. 1065 sqq. *Arnold* Hist. Theol. myst. p. 293 sqq. *Fabricius* Bibl. med. et inf. lat. T, iii. p. 229. *Schröckh* K. Gesch. xxxiv. 272. *Diepenbrock* in der Einleitung zu Suso's Schriften p. xix. sqq.

the progress of his life within has been depicted to us by one of his most faithful disciples, who was also his spiritual daughter, *Elizabeth Stäglin*, a nun in the convent of Tosse, or Toëss, near Winterthur,[1] and from intimations made to her by himself. This delineation is, at the same time, a type of the conception which Suso had formed of the inward development of a spiritual man. Any important particulars which can be gathered from it, and what we know of Suso from other sources, or learn directly from his writings, we shall weave together in the following account.

Henry *Suso*, descended from the *Bergers* or *de Bergs*,[2] an old proprietary family in the Hegau, was born[3] in one of the last years of the thirteenth century, or of the first of the fourteenth.[4] His father was a worldly-minded man. His mother, on the contrary, was, as he himself expresses it, "full of the mighty God."[5] This occasioned a most unhappy discrepancy between them. The husband resisted the piety of his spouse "with the utmost rigour and harshness, and great and many were the afflictions which she endured from this cause." For thirty years she never once attended mass from fear of her husband's anger.[6] Suso probably inherited from his father a certain taste for chivalry, and transplanted it into the sphere of religion. There can be little doubt, however, that his affectionate disposition must have been more drawn out towards "his holy mother," whose mind was more congenial with his own, and "by whose heart and body God had worked miracles[7] even during her life time." He adopted his mother's family name of *Suess*, or *Seuss*, latin-

[1] She died about the year 1360 (See *Murer* Helv. sanct. p. 345.), and gives some particulars respecting herself in the Leben Suso's K. 35. s. 114 sq.

[2] See *Murer* Helvet. sanct. p. 315. *Diepenbrock's* Einleit. p. xx.

[3] According to *Oudinus* (T. iii. p. 1065) zu *Constanz*; he calls Suso patria Constantiensis. The family of the Bergers flourished at Constance and Uberlingen. See Murer in l.c.

[4] Murer and Echard suppose the year 1300. His birthday was the feast of St Benedict. Leben S. K. 18, s. 47.

[5] Leben Suso's Kap. 8, s. 21; K. 45, s. 173.

[6] Leben Suso's s. 173.

[7] Ibid. s. 22.

ized into *Suso*, as his usual appellative,[1] and along with it the surname of *Amandus*, but this first became current after his death.[2]

Suso was "by birth a *Swabian*,"[3] and in the endowments of his mind bore the radical features which distinguish that race. To a vigorous, rich, and versatile fancy, he united penetrating sagacity, poetical genius, and speculative talent. Poetry, however, was evidently the predominating element in his mind. He sees everything in figures and signs. The objects of sense are to him symbols of objects far loftier, and these are disclosed to him in ecstacies and visions. He expatiates in a world of the most vivid intuition, and even speculation appears for the most part in a garb of sensible and rich imagery. His diction is never abstract, but always fresh and lively, richly coloured, beautiful, and often in a high degree impassioned. He is the Minne-singer of eternal love and wisdom,[4] imbued with the speculative notions of mysticism, but at the same time never withdrawing his view from life: And, if we may affirm in general, that mysticism of sound mould and pristine vigour, is the poetry pervading the religion of all nations, especially those of the modern world, so is Suso pre-eminently the poet among these Christian poets of mediæval Germany.

His natural vivacity,[5] which shewed itself in a beautifully fresh, and blooming complexion,[6] inclined him in his early years to the world. "He had from youth up a warm and loving heart",[7] and that was naturally not unsusceptible of impressions from sense.[8] But under the influence of his mother, his mind

[1] The name *Seuss*, *Säuss*, connected with *Saussen*, led Suso, when preaching, to make frequent allusions to it. See preface to the edition of 1512 bei *Diepenbrock* s. xx. der Einleitung.

[2] See die Stellen aus dem Prolog zur Ausgabe der Schriften Suso's von 1512, bei *Diepenbrock* Einl. s. xix. xx.

[3] Leben Suso's K. 1, s. 1. Also *Miraeus* in Auctar. ad Trith. c. 432, p. 80; Henr. Suso, natione Suevus.

[4] The same thing has been said by Hase K. G. § 346.

[5] "In youth he was of a very lively nature." Leben S. K. 17, s. 41. "As the servant in his youth had a fresh spirit." K. 38. s. 130.

[6] Leben S. K. 38, s. 130.

[7] Ibid. K. 4, s. 7.

[8] Ibid. K. 18, s. 45.

soon turned to higher objects, and after being himself apprehended by grace, he sought to bend all things into the service of the Spirit. Traits are related of his poetical piety, even in the period of childhood. He used, when a boy, to gather flowers in spring, and twine the most beautiful of them into a garland with which to decorate the image of the Virgin, because she was "the loveliest of all flowers, and the summer rapture of his heart."[1] At the age of thirteen, and, as is probable, mainly by the desire of his parents, he was taken into the Dominican convent at Constance. The instruction he there received, if judged by the standard of the age, was good. For the first five years of his monastic life he felt no inward awakening. "He wore an appearance of spirituality, but his mind was unsettled, and he was of opinion, that it mattered little how many venial faults he committed, provided God kept him from heinous offences."[2] With all, however, he was restless and dissatisfied. In his eighteenth year he took the first step in the spiritual life. He felt himself secretly drawn, and, "as it were by a bright light," to God. This soon wrought in him an entire change.[3] He was then seized with "an ardent desire to become and to be called a *Servant of Eternal wisdom*."[4] Eternal wisdom was revealed to him in her heavenly purity and loveliness, and now "as often as he heard of earthly love either in conversation or song, his heart and mind were directed to that dearest object of affection, from whom all love flows."[5] Hear how in lofty, but at the same time childlike, words he depicts the appearing of his celestial mistress.[6] "She floated high above him in the vaulted choir, she shone like the morning star, and seemed as the sun sporting in the dawn. Her crown was eternity, her robe was bliss, her word sweetness, her embrace the fulness of all delight. She was distant and yet near, high aloft and yet deep below. She was pre-

[1] Leben Suso's K. 38. s. 131. We may here remind the reader that in France, and probably from an old popular and poetic view, May is called the "month of Mary."

[2] Ibid. K. 1, s. 2.

[3] Ibid. s. 2.

[4] Ibid. K. 1, s. 1. K. 4, s. 8 sq.

[5] Ibid. K. 4, s. 11.

[6] Ibid. K. 4, s. 10, with which compare a similar beautiful and

sent and yet unseen, accessible and yet not palpable to the touch. She accosted him affectionately, and gently said, Give me thy heart, my child! He knelt at her feet and thanked her from his inmost heart, and in deep humility. Such was his vision, and none greater could he have received."

The *Wisdom* to which Suso now consecrated his whole heart, as the means by which the deification of his inward being was to be effected, involved in it two things; pure intelligence and thorough sanctification. Henceforward he incessantly strove after both. In the first place, accompanied "by a good comrade," he went to the University of Cologne[1] (for we must, doubtless, date this event subsequently to his conversion), in order to satisfy his *thirst of knowledge*. Here he studied scholastic philosophy and theology, and also made himself familiar with "virtuous heathen masters, especially with the judicious Aristotle," concerning whom he admitted, "that he had diligently sought and found the Lord of nature, and had demonstrated from nature's well-adjusted course, that there must necessarily be one sole Sovereign and Lord of all the creatures."[2] But, although he diligently cultivated and could well appreciate[3] speculation, or "the knowledge of how God is reflected in the creatures,"[4] his mind being not so much discursive and logical, as rather poetical and contemplative, was less adapted for this department, and his heart had already

poetical description in the Buche von der ewigen Weisheit K. 7, s. 273. Here Wisdom delivers among other things the following verse:

> In the Godhead the tune of joy I play,
> And the angel hosts so love the lay,
> That, tho' a thousand years fly past,
> It seemeth but an hour to last.

Other short poems of Suso, partly on the same subject, are given in the edition of Diepenbrock s. 474 sq.

[1] Leben S. K. 45, s. 174.

[2] Ibid. K. 54, s. 207.

[3] Specimens of Suso's speculation may be found especially in the last chapters of the notices of his life. No doubt, it is through and through interspersed with poetical elements, and often transcendental and obscure. His poetic vision also delights to lose itself in the invisible sphere, the empyrean heaven. See *e.g.*, das Buch von der ewigen Weisheit Kap. 12, s. 293 sq.

[4] Ibid. s. 203.

entered upon another, the theology of experience and love, or *mysticism*. Of the mystical doctrine, he found at Cologne a mighty advocate in Master *Eckart;* for, according to all probability, it was during the period of Suso's studies there, that he first became acquainted with that celebrated person, and fellow of his own order; although he may have seen him repeatedly afterwards. Eckart made a strong impression upon his mind. He is the only one among his teachers to whom Suso alludes by name. He calls him the "high, holy" Master, and his "sweet" doctrine a "generous drink."[1] He expresses in lively terms his gratitude to him for "calming"[2] his inward troubles; and such is his enthusiasm for his person, that even after Eckart's decease, he beholds him in a vision, and receives instruction from him.[3] There can be little doubt that Eckart was the first to confirm him in the elements of mysticism. Suso embraced his principle of union with God by self-annihilation. At the same time he never entirely occupied the ground of *Pantheism*, on which, for the most part, his teacher speculated and reasoned. For, although pantheistic allusions occur in his writings, his contemplation was essentially theistic, and he was much too poetical for the *Panlogismus* of Eckart, which consumed all actual and created existence. There can, therefore, be little doubt that it was the practical asceticism in his doctrine which attracted him, and to this he now directed the whole energy of his mind.

Suso had consecrated himself entirely to the service of heavenly *love*. He was aware, however, "that it belongs to love of ancient right to suffer, that none but a sufferer can woo her well, nor prove a true lover without being a martyr."[4] He accordingly entered the school of *afflictions*. These he at first imposed upon himself, but they were afterwards, and with much greater severity, appointed to him by God. From his eighteenth to his fortieth year,[5] he exercised and chastised his body in the most rigorous way. In spite of his love of nature, he kept himself in

[1] Leben Suso's K. 35. s. 117 and 118.
[2] Ibid. K. 23, s. 71.
[3] Ibid. K. 8, s. 21. Along with Eckart, the holy brother, John der Fuerer of Strasburg, likewise appears.
[4] Ibid. K. 4, s. 9.
[5] Ibid. K. 20, s. 57 and 58.

the retirement of the cloister; in spite of his affability, he observed the most unbroken silence;[1] and in spite of his lively sensitive temperament, he inflicted upon himself the most rigorous penances, that went to the blood and marrow.[2] As by this treatment "all his nature was made a waste," and there was no alternative but either to die or to desist, "God made him to see that the rigour and expedients which he had hitherto employed were nothing more than a good beginning, and breaking in of his wild and untamed nature."[3] He accordingly relinquished his self-inflicted penances, and allowed his body a proper and moderate care. The time was, however, come for him to enter the upper school, and learn the art of perfect resignation, that is, of so ceasing from self as, for the glory of God, joyfully to acquiesce in whatever He allots, as Christ did towards his heavenly Father.[4] Here began the term of Suso's spiritual *knighthood*.[5] In order to signalise it, a beautiful youth appeared to him in a vision, led him into a spiritual land, brought him knightly shoes and armour, and said, "Know that hitherto thou hast been a mere Squire. It is God's will that thou be henceforth a Knight." This term of knighthood to God would involve him in more and "greater hardship" than all the celebrated heroes of antiquity endured. "Survey the Heavens above thy head," was the language of the youth to him. "If thou canst count the multitude of the stars, then mayest thou also count the sufferings that await thee. And as the stars appear little, and yet are of vast magnitude, so are thy sufferings small in the eyes of inexperienced men, but in thine own sense of them they will be great to

[1] Leben Suso's K. 16, s. 40 and 41.

[2] Ibid. K. 17—21, s. 41—58, where the austerities, all of the utmost conceivable rigour, are severally detailed.

[3] Ibid. K. 20, s. 57, 58.

[4] Ibid. K. 21, s. 59.

[5] Suso, as already observed, had an element of chivalry in his character, which he probably inherited from his paternal race. He deals largely in conflicts, weapons, and other images taken from knighthood. To this class, no doubt, belongs his customary interjection, *Weapons! e.g.*, "He thought within himself, O weapons! how true this is!" K. 4, s. 10.—"The daughter said, Weapons! I float in the Godhead as the eagle does in the air!" K. 55, s. 217, and passim. Metaphors, from chivalric life may be found in K. 22, s. 61 sq., and also in K. 47, s. 180 sq.

endure."[1] Accordingly a long series of inward trials ensued, untimely collapses of faith, immoderate despondency, doubts of his own salvation, the treachery of friends, the malice and contradiction of worldly men, and, more than all, attacks upon his honour and good name, scorn, and poisonous calumny.[2] At last, it was his lot to be obliged to become Prior of his convent, and in this office also to experience the dislike of men.[3] He contemplated all contradiction, however, as a spiritual task allotted to him by God. Even the very worst, and Judas-like men, were to him only as "God's fellow-workers, who were to elaborate and make the best of him."[4] God sometimes refreshed[5] him amidst his sufferings, and at last, when he had manfully fought through them all, and thoroughly learned the precept which Christ in the form of a seraph had once presented to his view, viz., "Take suffering willingly; bear suffering patiently; learn to suffer like Christ,"[6] he was released, and "attained to inward peace of mind, calm repose, and lightsome grace. But it was given him to perceive that by this overthrow he had been more nobly translated from self into God, than by all the manifold sufferings, which, from his youth up, until that hour, he had ever endured."[7]

During this period, although he exercised himself much with solitude, and upon one special occasion, strictly confined himself for ten years to his monastery,[8] Suso was indefatigably active in gaining faithful lovers for Eternal wisdom and true friends for God. He laboured both with tongue and pen, and soon became celebrated as a rigid *preacher*, and a gentle *spiritual director*.[9] Wandering about in Swabia, Alsace, and as far down as the Netherlands,[10] he took an interest in all the weak,

[1] Leben Suso's K. 22, s. 61 sq.
[2] Ibid. K. 23, and the following s. 69 sq.
[3] Ibid. K. 46, s. 177 sq.
[4] Ibid. K. 40, s. 151.
[5] Ibid. K. 34, s. 109 sq.
[6] Ibid. K. 46, s. 176.
[7] Ibid. K. 40, s. 157.
[8] Ibid. K. 22, s. 67.
[9] Ibid. K. 36, s. 121. An example of the severity towards himself, and the gentleness towards others, which were united in Suso's character, may be found in his life, K. 37. s. 127.
[10] *E.g.* To Aix-la-Chapelle, Leben S. K. 49, s. 183.

the languishing, and the lost, brought sensual men to God,[1] endeavoured to withdraw their mind from an earthly, and raise it to a heavenly love,[2] comforted the sorrowful, and in many localities gathered together or consolidated quiet societies of "friends of God"[3] and "good children."[4] It is true this was not done without giving offence in various ways. Many fathers and husbands were exasperated against him, for inducing their daughters and wives to embrace a stricter method of life, or perhaps even to renounce the world for a monastery. A knight threatened to put him to death, because he had been informed[5] that "Suso had misled his daughter and many other persons into a singular manner of life which was called the *spirit*, just as they who followed it were called *male and female spirits*, and were the worst people upon the earth." On the whole, however, the faithful attachment of many, especially females,[6] and the reverence in which he was held by the common people, whom he so largely edified, far outweighed the shame that was cast upon him. In the constitution of his mind he united the qualities which his age most highly prized, the enthusiasm and amiability of the poet, the fortitude of the spiritual knight, the devotion of the Saint and Martyr, and all in that fanciful and romantic style which belonged to the character of the mediaeval period. For this reason, and especially as his piety was really so sound, vigorous, and fruitful at the core, he could not but be the object of love, admiration, and devoted faithfulness.

There can be no doubt that, as a *preacher*, Suso occupied a high place among his contemporaries. The impression produced by his lively eloquence[7] must have been very great. It united

[1] Leben Suso, K. 39. s 135 sq.

[2] Ibid. K. 42, s. 163 sq.

[3] He himself says, "I was called a dutiful father of the poor. Of all the *friends of God*, I was the *particular friend*. All persons, who were in sorrow and trouble, came to me, and obtained each some word of counsel, so that they went happy and comforted away; for I wept with those that wept, and mourned with those that mourned, until I had restored them like a mother." Leven Suso's K. 31, s. 99.

[4] Ibid. K. 44, s. 171. K. 45, s. 172 sq.

[5] Ibid. K. 30, s. 96, 97.

[6] Ibid. K. 36, s. 121. K. 45, s. 172 sq.

[7] Suso's nature, which inclined to life, and direct and vital impressions, evinces itself beautifully and characteristically in a passage of

depth with the most intuitive and transparent clearness, severe earnestness with affectionate suavity, and glowed throughout with that fire of enthusiasm which involuntarily infects every hearer. His countenance shone when he spoke. On one occasion, as he was preaching at Cologne, a layman asserted that he had seen his face "transformed into a ravishing glory, and three times become like the sun in brightness, so that he beheld in it his own reflection."[1] His inward nature, however, resembled a flame which seizes and dissolves all around it, but which is no less ever mounting upwards, in order as it were to reach the home of a purer existence. He took the creatures and the whole creation into his heart, that he might bear them aloft to the heart of God. This sentiment he has expressed with inimitable beauty, when expounding the ecclesiastical formula of *Sursum Corda!* We shall quote the passage, as it will also serve as a specimen of the ingenious, and pleasing, and at the same time impassioned, style of his delivery. "These words," he says,[2] "have always awakened within me three emotions, either single or combined. First, I placed myself with all that I am, body and soul, and every faculty before my inward eye, and around me I set all the creatures ever made by God in the realms of heaven, on earth, and in the elements, each with its own peculiar name. There were birds of the air, beasts of the forest, fish of the water, leaves and grass of

the preface to his work on Eternal wisdom, p. 242 and 243, which shows us at the same time what worth he ascribed to the living word, especially German. "One thing let me say. There is a great difference between hearing with one's own ear the sweet tones of a sweet instrument, and merely hearing them described by another; and no less great is the difference between words which flow from a living heart through a living mouth, and the self-same words when they come from a dead parchment, especially if they be in the German tongue; for in that case they cool and wither like fading roses. . . . Let a string sound ever so sweetly, if stretched on a dry log its sound will cease. A joyless heart can understand a joyful tongue as little as a German an Italian." Along with the properties which we have already ascribed to it, *Suso's diction* was here and there also witty and sportive. As a specimen of this, the following passage, in the book of the eternal wisdom, K. xix., may serve: "All the while love is beside love, love knows not how dear love is; but when love parts from love, then does love learn how dear love was."

[1] Leben Suso's K. 48, s. 183.

[2] Ibid. K. 11, s. 27, and 28.

the ground, innumerable pebbles of the deep, and, besides these, all the little atoms that glimmer in the sun-beam, and all the water-drops that ever fell, or are now falling, from dew, or snow, or rain, and my desire for them was that every one, from first to last, should have a sweet and piercing instrument of music formed of my heart's inmost sap, on which to play and raise a new and high-souled laud to the praise of the loved and loving God, from eternity to eternity. And then passionately were the loving arms of my soul stretched far and wide towards the innumerable multitude of created things, and it was my wish to enlist them all in this work, just as a free and cheerful leader stirs up his fellows in the choir to sing with alacrity, and offer up their hearts to God; *Sursum corda!*" In like manner, in the second place, he encloses in his own heart, the hearts of all men who still wear the fetters of perishable love, and calls to them, "Up! ye captive hearts, break away from the narrow bonds of transitory passion; Up! ye slumbering hearts, rise from the death of sin; Up! ye voluptuous hearts, forsake the lukewarmness of a slothful and inactive life; Mount with an entire and single turn aloft to the God of love; *Sursum corda!*" In like manner, thirdly, he embraces all well-inclined hearts, but which still wander and go astray within themselves, and waver between God and the creatures, and, including himself in the number, he exhorts them to a bold venture, and "a complete turning away from self and created things."[1] Imbued with this, which, in the deepest and largest sense, we may well call *priestly* consciousness, Suso spoke and laboured, and, as could not but happen, kindled a flame in the minds of many, and guided them to a piety which gushing from an inward source, far surpassed what was customary in the Church.

The particulars connected with the labours of Suso, and the dates of his residence at the several places where he lived, we do not precisely know. The greater part of his life, interrupted by journeys to Strasburg, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, and elsewhere, seems to have been spent in the Dominican convent at Con-

[1] Herder has very charmingly used this Sursum corda in a particularly beautiful poem, which shortly and admirably describes Suso's nature, and is entitled *Eternal Wisdom.* Werke zur schönen Lit. u. Kunst, B. 3.

stance, where, for his silent contemplations, he possessed a secret chapel,[1] decorated, as he has himself told us, with pictures. At a later period we find him in a convent of his own order, at Ulm. And here it was that he died upon the 25th of January, 1365,[2] about the sixtieth year of his age. He was buried in the cloisters.

Suso's doctrine,[3] which is in part contained in the foregoing sketch, like all mysticism, mainly turns upon the ideas of God, man, and the union between them. He has himself given the most succinct summary of it in the words,[4] "A meek man must be *deformed* from the creature, *conformed* to Christ, and *transformed* into the Deity." The particulars, however, may be expressed in the following heads. The property most peculiar to *God*, is that he is *Being*,[5] not, however, particular being, nor made up of parts, nor mingled with what is no being or other being; He is not a being that has still to be, or is capable, by any possibility, of receiving addition, but pure, simple, undivided, universal being.[6] This pure and simple being is the supreme cause of actual being, and includes all temporal existences, as their beginning and end. It is in all things, and out of all things, so that we may say, God is a circle whose centre is everwhere, but whose circumference is nowhere.[7] The simpler any being is, the richer is it also in power and efficiency. That which possesses nothing gives nothing away, that which possesses much has much to bestow. God possessing in himself the fulness of being, the all-perfect good, must necessarily be in his nature

[1] See supra p. 191. ann. 3.

[2] So said Murer and Echard, who both assign 1300 as the year of his birth. And so also says *Miraeus* Auctar. ad Trithem. cap. 432, p. 80: Henr. Suso . . . obiit Ulmae anno millesimo trecentesimo sexagesimo quinto. Others, on the contrary, especially *Oudinus* (T. iii. p. 1067) place his death considerably later, about the year 1385, and make him in 1369 the author of the Horologium divinae Sapientiae.

[3] On this subject comp. Görres in the introduction to *Diepenbrock's* Ausgabe von Suso s. 127 sq.

[4] Leben S. K. 53, s. 203.

[5] Ibid. K. 54, s. 207, Esp. K. 55, s. 213.

[6] Ibid. s. 213

[7] Ibid. s. 215.

communicative, and give forth himself from himself.[1] The first complete personal emanation of God is the Son. Into him the Father pours himself, and he into the Father, and the reciprocal love, which thus results, is the Holy Ghost.[2] This is the eternal and perfect communication of God; the temporal and finite is creation. In creation *Man* occupies the chief place. In one respect, as a created being he is finite and transitory; at the same time he has also been ennobled by the supreme transcendental Spirit shedding into him the beams of his eternal Godhead. This is the image of God in the rational mind, which is also eternal.[3] There are, however, men who relinquish this rational nobility, deprave the radiant image, and addict themselves to the bodily pleasures of the world. They imagine they possess joy, but find only dispeace, and death puts an end to all their delights.[4] The rational man, on the contrary, turns from the light spark in the soul aloft to that which is eternal, from which the spark has been emitted. He bids adieu to the creatures, and cleaves to eternal truth, and to it alone. Of this we have a pattern in Christ, the Son of God manifest in the flesh. In his life, as "in a mirror,"[5] we behold the most perfect self-denial, meekness, putting off of self, and absorption into the Deity. What he originally is, and always continues to be, it is our duty to become. This, however, must take place in a certain order.[6] The first step is turning away from worldly pleasure and sin to God, with assiduous prayer, retirement, and exercises of virtue, in order to render the body subservient to the spirit. The second is, a willingness to endure all the affliction which God or the creature may please to bring upon us. The third is, to have Christ's bitter passion, sweet doctrine, gentle walk, and spotless life, formed within us, that so he may dwell in us and we with him press forward to God.[7] Afterwards man relinquishes all external things, and enters into a stillness of mind as if he were dead to himself. He is weaned from the outward senses, which were previously over-active. The spirit experiences a collapse of its highest powers, and, losing all

[1] Leben Suso's s. 215.
[2] Ibid. s. 217 sq.
[3] Ibid. K. 57, s, 231.
[4] Ibid. s. 232.
[5] Ibid. K. 50, s. 186.
[6] Ibid. s. K. 57, s. 232.
[7] Ibid. s. 232, 233.

its natural properties, penetrates into the eternal Godhead.[1] Thus man is exalted to spiritual perfection, is made free by the Son, and is the Son. Above time and space, and in close and loving vision, he has *vanished into God*.[2] In depicting this loftiest grade of unity between God and the men who are truly divested of self, submissive and conformed to Christ, Suso, in sublime flights of poetry, often speaks as if the latter were wholly dissolved in the Godhead, and makes God say to them :[3] "I will embrace them so closely and lovingly that they and I, and I and they, and all of us together, shall continue a single unit for ever and ever." This, however, is not meant so *pantheistically* as it sounds. For as Suso everywhere recognizes a personal deity, and discriminates between a divine *Thou* and the human *I*, so does he also expressly maintain the distinctness of the Divine being, even in the perfect extinction of the creature. "For,"—the remarkable words are his own,[4]—"the spirit's annihilation and transition into the Deity, and its whole nobleness and perfection, are not to be taken as a transmutation of man's nature in such a way as that he is God, although by reason of his grossness he may not be conscious of it; or that he becomes God, and his own being is destroyed. But it consists in escaping from and contemning one's self. The spirit passes away. God has become all things to it, and all things have, in a manner become God. For all things answer to it according to the manner in which they are in God, *and yet everything continues to be what it is in its natural being*, and that is what an intellect unpractised in this true distinction cannot or will not admit into its confused apprehension." And in another passage,[5] "In this decline the spirit dies, and yet not altogether. It acquires certain *qualities* of the Godhead; but does not become *naturally God*. What is done to it is done *by grace*, for it is a real existence created out of nothing, and is of everlasting *duration*."

Suso, although upon the one hand affectionately devoted to

[1] Leben Suso's s. 233, with which comp. K. 56, s. 228, "The dying of the spirit consists in this, that in its transition into the Godhead, it perceives no distinction in the proper essence."

[2] Ibid. K. 57. s. 233.

[3] Ibid. K. 34. s. 110.

[4] Ibid. K. 52. s. 195.

[5] Ibid. K. 56. s. 227.

the Catholic Church, and wholly immersed in its symbolism and worship, whose riches of form and imagery captivated his fancy, was yet at the same time, to a certain extent, a *Reformer*. As such his influence operated in two ways; indirectly, inasmuch as he produced great excitement among the laity by his mysticism, and instituted fellowships among godly people, which inevitably led to their disconnecting themselves from the church and the control which she exercised in all spiritual affairs; and at the same time directly, inasmuch as he resolutely attacked the persons who governed in the Church, and the corruption of all classes, especially with respect to religion.

In the remarkable work "Of the nine rocks," "*Von dem neun Felsen*" which originated either with Suso himself, or at all events in the circle of mysticism to which he belonged, there is a particular section[1] which contains very strong complaints against the ecclesiastics of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, and from which we shall here make a few citations. To the *Popes* the author objects, that the light of good government is extinguished in them, and that they care more for their possessions and relatives than for the glory of God and the welfare of Christendom. His charge against the *Cardinals* is that, blinded by avarice and pride, they think of nothing but the aggrandisement of their families, and that, while in former times a holy dread of ascending the Papal throne prevailed, every one now does his utmost to attain to that highest dignity in the Church. The same complaints are levelled against *Bishops* and *Abbots*, besides the special charge against the former of impiously neglecting the teaching and pastoral care of their flocks. He says of *teachers*, that there are but few of them who would hazard their lives for God and truth, so few, that it is better their number should be unknown. He inveighs against the *monastic orders* on account of their disobedience, luxury, and incontinence, and against the *secular clergy* for their debauchery, their unclerical dress, and keen pursuit of property, posts, and honours. The following observations respecting them are very characteristic. "All godly earnestness," he says, "has disappeared, and is forgotten among them; indeed they have lost the

[1] Kap. 5—23. s. 513—537. in Diepenbrock.

inward sense of it, as if it were a matter in which they had no concern. They never think of it, but occupy their minds with the great ecclesiastical benefices, and how these may be acquired, and with learning the art of gaining reputation, honour, and wealth among the clergy and laity. Their tastes are directed to that far more than to the knowledge of God and the enjoyment of his inward grace. Of those who really desire the grace of God, the number is very small, and were they all to depart this life, Christianity would at once come to an end."[1] In the same style he chastises other societies and ranks, such as the Beguines and Beghards, the nobles and gentlemen, the citizens and peasantry, from all which it appears that, like Ruysbroek, he looked upon the times in which he lived as deeply and generally corrupt, and a Christian Reformation as urgently required.

CHAPTER SECOND.

SENTIMENTAL MYSTICISM. JOHN TAULER.

If even in the case of Suso the popular tendency is principally conspicuous, and his labours found a free and partly an extra-ecclesiastical field among the laity; in *Tauler* we see this *popular element* in a still stronger degree. It was by a layman that he was converted, and fully led into the way of a spiritual and enlightened Christian life and activity, and not until then that he succeeded in exercising the influence as a preacher, by which he acquired so great celebrity. At the same time the character of *Reformer* is also more strongly stamped upon him, in respect that he puts himself formally into opposition to enactments of the Church's supreme Head; yea, to one of the most important hierarchical institutions, that of excommunication and the interdict, and even imparts the same spirit to the people. This arose from the nature of the case. Fancy, which exercised the chief sway over the mind of Suso, is versatile, and can

[1] Cap. 12, s. 521 and 522.

adapt itself to a variety of forms, provided only these embody something ingenious or magnificent. On the contrary, the heart which we recognise as the determining power in Tauler, is the uniform, stable, and permanent centre of the inward life: and hatred or hostility proceeding from it is far more decided, vigorous, and obstinate.

John Tauler,[1] of whom we know still fewer particulars, and these with less chronological accuracy, than of Suso, was a Dominican monk, and lived at Cologne[2] and Strasburg, the two principal seats of German mysticism. It is possible that in his youth, he too had made the acquaintance of Master Eckart at Cologne, and had heard his lectures. Of this, however, we find no certain traces in his writings. His mode of thinking is of quite a different kind from that of Eckart, being the mysticism, not of speculation, but of sentiment. It does not, with pantheistical boldness, suppose man directly identical with the Divine Being, but subjects him to God and his government, in child-like and devoted piety. During the first and longer period of his life, Tauler was addicted not to the mystical, but to the scholastical theology. He appears to have studied it at Cologne, and in the spirit of his order, that is, as a Thomist. But as there was a mystical element in scholasticism itself, and generally in the whole age in which he lived, it is possible that mysticism may have exercised an influence upon him at a very early period.[3] Still it was not

[1] The chief source of information respecting Tauler's course of life is a piece drawn up by a friendly layman (or according to others, by Tauler himself), and entitled, "Historie und Leben des ehrwürdigen Doctors Joh. Tauler, mehrfach abgedruckt." Besides this, see Quetif et Echard Scriptor. Ord. Praed., T. i. p. 677. Miræus Auctar. ad Trithem c. 45 T. p. 83. (Trithemius himself does not mention Tauler:) Fabricius Bibl. med. et inf. Lat. iv. 151. Arnold Kirch. u. Ketzerhist. iii. 664. Oberlin Dissert. de Joh. Tauleri dictione vernac. et myst. Argent. 1786. Bayle Dict. s. v. Tauler. Jörden's Lexik. deutscher Dichter u. Prof. B. 5, s. 1. Schröckh. K. Gesch. xxxiii. 484. Some farther particulars are contained in the introduction to the edition of his sermons published at Frankf. 1826, Th. 1, s. 1 sq. A complete monography is expected from the pen of Professor K. Schmidt in Strasburg.

[2] Miraeus in l. c. designates Tauler as *Coloniensis*, meaning thereby to indicate his birth-place. In like manner, Specklin in the Collectanea, which we shall cite below, speaks of Tauler as "born at Cologne."

[3] We find this, for instance, in the sermon which he preached before his conversion. See below Annot. 6.

until about the fiftieth year of his age, that he fully adopted, and became an influential preacher of it.[1] The revolution which his mind underwent is very remarkable. Tauler, "naturally a sweet, gentle, and kind-hearted man,"[2] possessed, as a theologian, "a good insight into Scripture," as well as into the wisdom of the schools, and was already followed and admired as a preacher. Still he was destitute of the light of grace, of true spiritual understanding, and of a thoroughly self-denying life in God.[3] There came, however, from a distance, a layman, and one "enriched with grace," to hear him preach. For twelve weeks he listened to the master, and then solicited him to explain fully in a sermon, by what way it is practicable for man to reach nearest and rise highest to God.[4] Tauler preached the discourse, and, with scholastic art, explained his views.[5] The layman was, however, far from satisfied. He acknowledged that Tauler "was no *common* preacher, and had delivered a good discourse." At the same time, he objected to him that he still clave to the letter more than to the Spirit, mixed the good wine of his doctrine with lees, did not live according to his teaching, but was attached to the creatures, and "specially to one creature;" in short, that although he was not one of the false Pharisees, he was still somewhat Pharisaical.[6] Tauler recognised his image in the mirror thus presented to his view, turned his thoughts inward, and promised thorough amendment. He put away "sensuousness and rational speculation," went into retirement, gave up preaching, and lived entirely according to the directions of the layman.[7] His whole endeavours were directed to the attainment of a bottomless and humble resignation in all

[1] Hist. u. Leben Tauler's, K. 5, in der Frankf. Ausg. der Predigten Th. 1, s. 16.

[2] Historie u. Leben K. 1, s. 1.

[3] Ibid. s. 1.

[4] Ibid. s. 2.

[5] The sermon is given in the Hist. K. 2, s. 2—6). It contains mystical doctrine, but of a very artificial and complex kind, whereas the mysticism of Tauler in after times was distinguished by *simplicity*; for example, he requires in the sermon, that man shall come over "forty contemplations," and that the enlightened man shall have in him "twenty-four particulars" (s. 3), which (s. 4—6) are enumerated.

[6] Historie u. Leben. K. 3, s. 6—9.

[7] Ibid. K. 5, s. 15.

things, and *of conformity to the true image of our Lord Jesus Christ.*[1] Although he did not resort to excessive discipline, his new mode of life attracted the observation of those about him. His brother monks and friends despised him, his spiritual children no longer came to confess to him, and he sank into a state of weakness and sorrow.[2] But the pious layman was all the better pleased on that account, and promised him that he would now, by the light of the Holy Spirit, understand Scripture in its unity and preach eternal life with proper effect. After passing two years in such inward exercises and conflicts, although with no immoderate discipline,[3] he at length, at the instigation of his spiritual Father, reappeared as preacher.[4] On the first occasion, so deeply was he moved, that he could not speak for weeping.[5] This gave still greater offence. The second trial, however, preceded by a short address in the convention-room of the monastery, and as Tauler's soul was at last thoroughly cleansed, was highly successful. He declared that he would no more, as formerly, quote Latin before the people, but in plain German shew them the right paths, "which, alas! are now sorely laid waste and broken up."[6] His discourse, which was upon the text so frequently handled by the mystics, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," produced a deep impression. One of the audience exclaimed aloud, "It is true!" and dropped as if he were dead to the ground.[7] Others fell into the same state.[8] From that time the master increased in wisdom, as well as reputation, in town and country, to such a degree,[9] that he was consulted both in spiritual and temporal matters, by great numbers who universally honoured his counsel by obedience to it.[10] In all probability, it was after his conversion to mysticism that

[1] Historie und Leben Suso K. 7, s. 21.
[2] Ibid. K. 8, s. 22 sq.
[3] Ibid. K. 8, s. 23.
[4] Ibid. K. 9, s. 24 sq.
[5] Ibid. s. 27.
[6] Ibid K. 10, s. 28—34.
[7] Ibid. s. 32.
[8] Ibid. K. 11, s. 34, 35.
[9] Contemporaries give him the honourable name of *theologus sublimis et illuminatus.*
[10] Hist. u. Leben K. 14, s. 42—45.

he travelled to Grünthal to see Ruysbroek. This visit, presupposing as it does a secret bias to the views of that Mystic, could scarcely fail to confirm him in them.[1] Tauler was a far better scholastic than Ruysbroek; but Ruysbroek, having practised it from his youth up, was greatly his superior in power and depth of contemplation. In one respect, indeed, we must even here concede to Tauler the superiority. Less austere and transcendental in his mysticism, he evinces a more penetrating moral spirit, and delivers his sentiments in a clearer, more elegant, simple, and popular style.[2] For eight years[3] after his change, he continued to labour as a preacher of great power. In his latter days at Strasburg, where he was fondly listened to by Bishop Bechtoff, and patronized by men of congenial minds, Ludolph the Carthusian and Thomas the Augustinian,[4] he collected around him numbers who shared his sentiments, and in the year 1361,[5] after an illness of twenty weeks, departed this life.

The *doctrine of Tauler*, which penetrated so deeply into the hearts of others because it gushed with undivided force from his own, is enunciated in various treatises, but particularly in his sermons. These,[6] though not what is called flowery, are yet like a meadow, adorned everywhere with fresh and fragrant flowers, rich in spiritual insight and manifold examples from life, and full of kind, affectionate, hearty, and profound expressions, by which the author has won for himself the place of chief founder of the language of mysticism among the Germans. They contain, under a multitude of varying

[1] Compare Arnolds Ausgabe v. Ruysbroeks Schriften, Offenb. 1701, in dem voranstehenden Leben Ruysbroeks K. 8 and 11, s. 8—12.

[2] The opinion of de Wette, Sittenl. ii. 2, s. 236, is somewhat different. He allows that Tauler's mysticism is very deep, spiritual, and speculative, but he denies to it weight in respect that it is almost wholly negative, stops short at the renunciation of what is terrestrial and finite, and neglects what is positive, substantial, and divine.

[3] Hist. u. Leben K. 14, s. 42.

[4] Comp. Görres' Extracts from a work of Specklin's in the introduction to Diepenbrocks Ausg. von Suso, s. xxxix.

[5] This appears from the inscription on his tombstone, which still survives. See Jacob von Königshofen Elsass. u. Strassburg. Chronik mit Joh. Schilters Anhange, Strassburg 1698. 4. s. 1119.

[6] They have been often printed; recently with the style modernised, but the antique complexion preserved, at Frankf. a. M. 1826. 3 Th. 8.

[7] Respecting Tauler's language, see the Dissertation by Oberlin de Johannis Tauleri dictione vernacula et mystica. Argent. 1786. 4.

forms, the following main propositions:[1] Man, as a creature originating directly from God, who is one, longs to return, according to his capacity, back to the undivided unity. The efflux strives again to become a reflux: and only when all things in him have become wholly one in and with God, does he find entire peace and perfect rest. The means to this end, are to rise above sense and sensuality, corporeal and natural powers, all desires, figures and imagery, and thus freed from the creatures, to seek God solely and directly, spirit with spirit, and heart to heart. The divine perfect life can become ours only when we die within, and cease to be ourselves. But this cannot be effected by the power of nature. It must be done by grace, and through the mediation of Christ. What belongs to God by nature, man must acquire by grace. To this end the pattern of Christ has been given to him. As Jesus came from the Father, and returns to the Father again, so is this the destination of every man. As Christ died a bodily death, and rose again from the dead, so must every man spiritually die and revive, in order wholly to live in and with God. The image of Christ, however, which must be engraved on the heart, is the likeness not of what is created and visible, but of what is noble, divine, and rational in the Son of God, the God-man. He who has this image in his heart is never without God, and, wherever God is at all, there he is wholly. Such a man acquiesces fully in the divine will, resigns himself entirely to God, stands in bottomless patience, humility, and love, and herein enjoys perfect blessedness. In this manner Tauler, although not the first who did so, introduced with peculiar efficacy and success the important doctrine of the *imitation of Christ*,[2] and of the adoption of his life of poverty and active love, as an essential element, into the sphere of mysticism, securing to it by that means a rich practical content of which, in the hands of Ruysbroek, it was as yet destitute.

Another main notion of Tauler's, we mean that of genuine

[1] A sketch of Tauler's doctrine will be found in de Wette's christl. Sittenlehre ii. 2, s. 220 sq. The short compendium of it which I have here given is taken from several of his most important discourses.

[2] On this subject, as is well known, he composed a work of his own, entitled Von der Nachfolgung des armen Lebens Christi. It has been often published, and at Frankfort a. M. in 1833.

evangelical *poverty*,[1] is closely connected with the doctrine of the Imitation of Christ, inasmuch as he considers the life of Christ the object which we are to copy in this poverty. By poverty, Tauler does not understand merely such a destitution of all terrestrial goods as the eye can perceive, but rather the inward disconnection and distance of the soul from all things, so that it is attached to nothing and nothing to it, full inward liberty, "a free power and pure action."[2] In this view God himself, as well as Christ, is the pattern of poverty, and true poverty "a resemblance to God." It is true that by his very nature man, like all other things, must cleave to and depend upon somewhat. This, however, should not be a thing beneath himself, but only that which is exalted above all things, God. The chief nobility of poverty consists in this, that it cleaves to him who is high over all, and, as far as possible, parts with what is low. Hence man ought to be poor in knowledge as regards the images which he takes in through the senses, and poor in graces and virtues, so far as these are of creature growth. All virtue, however, is of creature growth when it consists in outward works, or is accidental or complex. It is divine when it springs from a pure intention, and is essential and one; for the truly poor man possesses all virtue in simple love, and hence virtue is quite consistent with poverty. This poverty is empty of all things, free, noble, constrained by no one, and therefore like God, for God is a free power. That the liberty of man is under rule to God is evident from the fact, that it originates in true humility, and terminates in humility, in patience, in all virtues, and in God; whereas liberty that is under no rule, arises from pride, and ends in pride, wrath, and other vices. In the same way, poverty also like God is pure action. To work is to make something out of nothing, or one thing out of another, or a better out of a worse, or to annihilate a thing that is. Just then as God, though Himself immoveable, moves all things, so does poverty, though in itself fixed and motionless, with God,

[1] Explained in the afore-mentioned work, Von der Nachfolge Christi. Auszug bei de Wette Sittenl. ii. 2, s. 221 sq.

[2] An idea which most mendicant monks in their secularity could not apply to themselves, and which, on their side, had probably a polemical reference.

move all things. Compounded of time and eternity, man, in respect of those higher faculties which reach into eternity, is immoveable, while, at the same time, he moves the inferior powers, which are according to time. Man's working, however, is threefold, viz., work of nature, work of grace, and work of God. The first, of nature, being of itself and apart from sin, not evil but noble, if it be only well treated, ought to purify man; the second operates purely; the third is pure. The last comprehends in it all that proceeds from love, for the spirit of God is the spirit of love, and that which comes from love comes from God. Man becomes of one spirit with God by following Christ, as Christ has gone before us, for Christ is one with God, and at the same time, the end and aim of all men. Let a man of true poverty be penetrated by the life, sufferings, and works of Christ, and he then becomes of one spirit with God. In him the Spirit speaks not by images and forms, but with life and light and truth. The divine light begets the will, and renders it fruitful in all virtues; and this birth is essential and perfect. Man is thereby born anew *into* God and attains to his original nobility, being created with God in holiness and righteousness. He is also, however, born anew *outwardly*, in respect that his whole outward man is changed into a new fashion which is deiform, and that as before he yielded his members instruments of unrighteousness, he now yields them to God to serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

If, despite his contemplative nature, Tauler by his moral spirit, and by the earnestness and affectionate power of an eloquence, which gushed from the heart, produced a deep impression upon the people, the *ecclesiastical opposition* in which we find him involved,[1] is to be accounted for by the practical and inward character of his piety, by the sentiment which animates his mysticism, and by the faithful sympathy which he felt for the neglected masses It is true that in respect of doctrine, as a Dominican and formerly a scholastic, he kept himself apparently within the limits assigned

[1] Flacius does not fail to give Tauler a place among the Testes veritatis. Catal. Lib. xviii. T. ii. p. 773.

by the Church. But in ecclesiastical matters of a practical kind, the zeal of his love for the people changed into a zeal of indignation their false leaders. He expressed himself strongly against[1] letting the poor and ignorant die under *excommunication* without any fault of theirs; and emitted several consolatory tracts exhorting priests to administer them the sacraments before their decease. On this account he was himself excommunicated along with his two friends, Ludolph, and Thomas, whom we have already mentioned. The Pope prohibited their books, and instructed Bishop John of Strasburg to commit these to the flames. But the undaunted men wrote only with all the greater zeal,[2] "and produced such an effect, that the people died content, and were no longer much afraid of excommunication; whereas, previously, thousands of them had expired without absolution, and in great despair."[3] At the same time, they caused a writing to be circulated among the clergy and the learned, of the following weighty import:[4] That there are *two kinds* of *sword*, one spiritual, even the Word of God, and one temporal, viz., the Divinely instituted magistracy; that neither of them ought to interfere with the other; that both being derived from God, they could not be opposed to each other; that the spiritual weapon was bound to defend the magistracy; while the temporal had to protect the holy men who preached the Divine Word; that in the case of a temporal head falling into sin, it behoved the spiritual, humbly to correct the sinner, but not to condemn him, and far less to let the poor people suffer for the transgressions of the great. "Magistracy," they said,[5] "is an estate instituted by God, and, in temporal matters, all must obey it, even the clergy, be they who they may. The Emperor is supreme magistrate, and therefore

[1] See the interesting extracts from Specklin's Collectanea (from the time of Charles V.), of which the manuscript is in the library at Strasburg, given by Görres in the introduction to Diepenbrock's Ausg. von Suso s. xxxix—xliii.

[2] In one of his sermons (Pred. 131. Th. 1, s. 141), Tauler no doubt speaks of excommunication, like an obedient son of the Church. He is not willing "to be called a heretic, or be subjected to excommunication."

[3] Specklin's Collectanea in l. c. s. xli.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. s. xlii.

obedience is due to him before all. If he govern wrong, he is responsible to God for his conduct, and not to poor men. . . . . For these reasons, none who hold the true Christian faith, and *only sin against the person of the Pope*, are *heretics*, but those are heretics who, in spite of remonstrance, obstinately act contrary to God's word and refuse to amend." Charles IV. in concert with the Bishop of Strasburg and Papal commissioners, enjoined that Tauler and his associates should moderate these expressions, and under pain of excommunication suppress what they had published. "But," says the narrator, "they persevered in their former course, without amendment. Nothing further was done, and all went home."[1]

Luther only required to know such a man as Tauler in order to love him, not so much on account of his opposition to the Papal power, which we have just mentioned, but of which perhaps the Reformer never heard, but, far more, on account of the solid Christian piety, which thought in a German way, and spoke the German tongue, for which he felt a deep reverence, and by which he formed his mind, before he himself dreamed of any kind of opposition. He called Tauler "a man of God." He exhorts his friend, John Lange,[2] "to keep to Tauler," and writes to Spalatin,[3] "If it will gratify you to become acquainted with a solid Theology in the German tongue, perfectly resembling that of the ancients, procure for yourself John Tauler's sermons, for neither in Latin nor in our own language, have I seen a theology more sound, or more in accordance with the Gospel. Taste and see how gracious is the Lord, if you have previously tasted and seen how bitter is all that we are in ourselves." Melancthon also assents to this opinion. He says,[4] "Among the moderns *Tauler* is much the most eminent. I hear, however, that there are some sophists who presume to despise the thoroughly Christian doctrine of that celebrated man." Melancthon has here an eye especially upon John Eck, who, merely with the view of contradicting Luther, depreciated Tauler.[5] Even in the Catholic

[1] Specklin's Collectanea s. xliii.

[2] Letter of the 5. Oct. 1516. Th. 1, s. 34 in de Wette.

[3] Letter of the 14th Decemb. 1516. Th. 1, s. 46.

[4] See Praefat. edit. Francof.

[5] *Miraei* Auctar. ad Trith. p. 83: Hunc virum, ut suspectum circa fidem, contempsit Johannes Eckius.

Church, however, this great mystic has found admirers in men of rank and talent, among whom we will mention only Bossuet, Bona, Petrucio, and Du Pin.[1] All shews of what consequence Tauler became in the period immediately following, and Luther's opinion more especially attests the influence which the pious mystic had, in laying in his inmost heart the foundation of those Christian sentiments, without which he would never have become the effectual Reformer of the Church.

We find the same results, proceeding from a somewhat different quarter, viz., the work entitled *Deutsche Theologie* or "*German Theology*."[2]

CHAPTER THIRD.

SPECULATIVE MYSTICISM. THE GERMAN THEOLOGY.

All that German mysticism had hitherto, with the aid of fancy and poetry, produced, and in simple and affecting diction made level to the people, the unknown but profound author of the little treatise, which bears the name of "Deutsche Theologie,"[3]

[1] *Weismanni* Hist. eccl. 1, 1132.

[2] Spener (Pia Desid. p. 140) Spener says: "The *German Theology* and Tauler's writings, from which, and the Scriptures, our beloved Luther became what he was."

[3] In his preface to the edition of this work published in 1516, Luther says, that the author of it is a Teutonic Knight in priests' orders, and holding the situation of Warden of the Teutonic Knights at Frankfurt. *Placcius* (Theatr. Anonymor. et Pseudon. Cap. xi. p. 441—451. Comp. *Schrockh* K. Gesch. xxxiv. 72) has farther attempted to shew that his name was Ebland or Eblend. Conjecture has also lighted upon Tauler, who, however, was of the preceding age (*Flacius* Catal. Test. verit. Lib. xix. T. ii. p. 858), and whose whole character is very different from that of the book, and upon another unknown man, the physician Gratalorus; both suppositions, however, are without sufficient foundation. Comp. *Waldau* Thesaur. bio. et bibliogr. Pag. 291—303. *Mich. Neander* Erotem. gr. ling. Praef. p. 311. *Possevini* Apparat. sacer, T. iii. p. 287. *Arnold* K. u. Ketzer-hist. i.

—*German Theology*—at a somewhat more advanced period, speculatively digested in order to form, as a counter-part to Scholasticism, and more distinctly than had hitherto been done, a *system of sacred doctrine*[1] of his own, level to all capacities, and based on good scriptural and logical grounds.

The "German Theology" sets out with a principle of great philosophical importance, viz., the thorough *difference* between that *which is perfect* and that which is in *part*.[2] The perfect is a being which comprehends and includes all within itself, without which, and apart from which, no true being exists, which is itself unchangeable and motionless, and yet changes and moves all other things. The partial or imperfect is that which originates in, or takes its being from, the perfect, emanating from it as brightness from the sun; in a word, it is the creature. These two are essentially different. The partial is conceivable and utterable, the perfect inconceivable and unutterable. Now, inasmuch as the Apostle says that, when that which is perfect is come, *then that which is in part shall be done away*, and inasmuch as that which is perfect, not being one of the things which are in part and perceptible, can only come in as far as it is known and felt in the soul, the question arises, How can the perfect be known, seeing that it cannot be conceived? To this the author replies. It is inconceivable to the creature. The creature as such, *i.e.* in respect of its created nature and being, is incapable of knowing it. It follows that the creature, in order to attain to a knowledge of the perfect, must undo its creature-nature, being, and self. By doing this it attains to the perfect; nay, it is already in it. For, although extrinsic to the perfect, still being an emanation from it, it has true being only in it. Of itself, however, it

400, iv. 78—81. Besides Luther's edition, which was repeated at Strasburg in 1519, several were published, viz., by Joh. *Arnd* 1631, by *Grell* Berl. 1817, by *Krüger* Lemgo 1822, by *Troxler* St Gallen 1837, and others. A Latin translation of it by Castellio (under the name of Joh. Theophilus) appeared at Basle in 1557.

[1] Brief summaries of it are given by de *Wette* Sittenl. ii. 2, s. 248 and *Rosenkranz* die deutsche Mystik, zur Geschichte der deutschen Lit. Königsb. 1836. s. 37. The chief points are stated by J. Arnd in the preface to his edition.

[2] Kap. 1 Ausg. von Grell s. 1—3.

is but like an accident or radiation, which has its proper being only in the light from which it proceeds.[1] If the creature recognise itself in the immutable Good, and as one therewith, and live and act in this knowledge, then it is itself good and perfect. But if, on the contrary, the creature revolt from that Good,[2] it is then evil. All sin consists in apostatizing from the supreme and perfect Good, in making self an object, and in supposing that it is something, and that we derive from it any sort of benefit, such as existence, or life, or knowledge, or ability. This the devil did, and it was by this alone he fell. His presuming that he too was something, and that something was his, his "I" and his "me," and his "my" and his "mine," were his apostacy and fall. In the self-same way Adam also fell.[3] Eating the apple was not the cause of his fall, but his arrogating to self his "*I*" and "*me*" and "mine." But for this, even if he had eaten seven apples, he would not have fallen. Because of it, however, he must have fallen, although he had not tasted the one. So is it with every man, in whom the same thing is repeated a hundred times. But in what way may this apostacy and general fall be repaired? The way is for man to come out of self (isolation as a creature), and enter into God. In order to this, two parties must concur, God and man.[4] Man cannot do it without God; and God could not do it without man. And, therefore, it behoved God to take upon him human nature and to become man, in order that man might become God. This once took place in the most perfect way in Christ, and as every man should become by grace what Christ was by nature,[5] it ought to be repeated in every man, and in myself among the rest. For were God to be humanized in all other men, and all others to be deified in him, and were this not to take place in me, my fall would not be repaired. In that way Christ restores what was lost by Adam.[6] By Adam came selfishness, and with it disobedience, all evil, and corruption. By Christ, in virtue of his pure and divine life transfusing itself into men, come the annihilation of selfishness, obedience, and union with God, and therein every good thing, peace, heaven, and blessedness.

This is the fundamental thought of the "German Theology."

[1] Kap. 1, s. 2.
[2] Kap. 2, s. 3.
[3] Kap. 3, s. 3 and 4.
[4] Kap. 3, s. 4.
[5] Kap. 14, s. 20
[6] Kap. 13, s. 16.

Let us observe how the ingenious and profound author carries it out in detail. There can be no doubt that, according to his conviction, all depends upon *knowledge*. For only in so far as the perfect, or the chief good, is known and inwardly apprehended, does it exist for us. But then knowledge is to this German theologian not a mere logical process, but a knowledge of love, of faith, of experience. He cannot, in the first place, separate knowledge from *love*. On the one hand, no doubt, he says,[1] every sort of love must be taught and guided by some light or knowledge. True light makes true love, and false light makes false love. For that which the light judges to be best, it presents as the best to love, and bids her love it, and love follows the light and obeys its command. On the other hand, however, he says as expressly,[2] Be it known that light or knowledge without love is nothing, and is worth nothing. A man may know full well what virtue is, but if he do not love it, he does not become virtuous. If he love virtue, however, he follows after her, and so by love is made the enemy of vice. A mere knowledge even of the highest objects, without the love of them, is to the German theologian, a false light leading only to selfish pride. For[3] it is the special property of the false light of nature, that it would fain know much, and that it reckons knowledge the best and noblest of all things; and therefore it teaches love, to love knowledge, as if it were so. But lo! in that way knowledge or insight comes to be more loved than its object, and it soars, or climbs so high,[4] as to fancy that it knows God, and pure and simple truth, and yet in him loves only itself. For, inasmuch as God is known by nothing but God, so in fancying that it knows God, it fancies that it *is God*, giving itself out as, and desiring to be taken for, Him. It longs to mount far above all things, even above *Christ and Christ's life*, and all becomes to it a mockery. This knowing for mere knowing's sake, without any love for the object, belongs to nature, for nature as such loves nothing but itself.[5] In like manner the knowledge of Divine things ought also to be kept within certain

[1] Kap. 40, s. 63.
[2] Kap. 39, s. 60.
[3] Kap. 40, s. 63.
[4] Ibid. s. 64.
[5] Ibid. s. 65.

limits. It ought not to wish to penetrate into the secret counsel and will of God.[1] It is inseparable from *faith* and *experience*. He who seeks to know before he believes, never attains to true knowledge.[2] No doubt every Christian man, whether good or bad, believes the articles of the Christian faith, and ought to believe them, even although he may know nothing of them; but as much of their truth as it is possible to know, must be believed, before it is known, and this is the faith which Christ intends.[3] The divine and perfect has always about it something ineffable: He who does not *possess*, cannot express it; and he who does possess and know it, also can not express it. But let him who desires to know it, wait until he *becomes*[4] it.

There is a knowledge from *books* by reading and hear-say. It is, however, not true knowledge, but mere (outward) belief.[5] In order to attain to vital knowledge, man must retire into himself.[6] For although it be good to enquire and learn and know what other pious and holy men have done and suffered, and how they lived, and what God wrought and willed in and through them, it is yet a hundred times better for a man to learn and know, what and how, his own life is, what God is, and wills and works within him, and for what purposes He means to use him, and for what not. If a man is, or is to be, saved, he must and will have the *One* sole thing in his soul.[7] That one thing is good; but it is not this good or that. It is all and above all. Neither does it require to be introduced into the soul, for it is there already; only it is unperceived. And when we speak of its entering the soul, that is equivalent to saying, we ought to seek, and feel, and taste it. And to qualify the soul for thus perceiving and embracing this one and chief good, it has also a peculiar organ. It possesses the power of contemplating the eternal in the *reason*, and of apprehending it in the *will*.[8] With respect to the former faculty, the soul has two eyes.[9] The one is the ability to see

[1] Whoever is curious to know why God has done or left undone this thing or that, desires the self-same thing that Adam and the devil did. Kap. 48, s. 77.

[2] Kap. 46, s. 75.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Kap. 19, s. 25.

[5] Kap. 40, s. 64 and 65.

[6] Kap. 9, s. 10 and 11.

[7] Ibid. s. 11.

[8] Kap. 48, s. 78.

[9] Kap. 7, s. 8 and 9.

into eternity; the other, to see into time, into the creatures and their difference. These two eyes, however, cannot exercise their office[1] simultaneously. If the soul have to look, with the right eye, into eternity, the left must for the time remain as if it were dead; and if the left have to exercise its function upon external things, the right must then be hindered in its contemplation. The eye of the soul, or the reason, obtains that direction towards eternal things, for which it is destined, through the will, and both reason and will are inseparable, and constitute a living whole.[2] "The noblest and most delightful thing," says the German theology,[3] "in all creatures, is knowledge, or reason and will. These two co-exist, so that where the one is, there the other is also. Did they not exist, there would be no intelligent creature, but only brutes and brutishness. This would be a great defect in the creation. For God could not then carry forth his attributes into practical effects, which, however, is right, and belongs to the perfection of both God and His world. The eternal will which is in God, is there originally without works or operation.[4] In man, however, the will is operative and optative. Accordingly, in order to operate, it must have its own work; and in order to exercise an option, it must be *free*. Among all free things, says our theologian,[5] none is so free as the will. Whosoever makes it his own, and does not leave it to its freedom, and nobility, and unrestrained ways, does wrong. He who leaves it in its noble freedom, does right. The will becomes not free, when it is appropriated either by self or any other creature. It remains *free*, when, set loose from self and all created things, it stands in God and in truth. Want of freedom in the will produces dissatisfaction, care, restlessness, and misery, in time and eternity; whereas, from freedom of will, flow contentment, peace, rest, and blessedness, in time and eternity. True freedom, however,—that of which Christ says, "The truth shall make you free;" and again, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,"—has its foundation in God, the chief Good, and in union with him.

This brings us to *God*, and *man's relation to Him*.

[1] Kap. 7, s. 9.
[2] Kap. 48, s. 78.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Kap. 49, s. 78 and 78.
[5] Kap. 50, s. 81

The "German theology," like all other systems of mysticism, distinguishes between *God* and *Godhead*, and again between *God in and of Himself*, and *God incarnate*.[1] Godhead is the Divine Being in his abstract generality; God is the same Being revealing Himself and existing in a diversity of persons; and God incarnate is still the same Being operating outwardly. To God, as Godhead, it says,[2] pertains neither will, nor knowledge, nor revelation, nor any other thing which it is possible to name, or think, or speak of. But to God, as God, pertain manifesting, acknowledging, and loving Himself, the revelation of Himself to Himself, and all this in God, and all likewise in Him as a Being, and not an operation, there being no intervention of the creature, which out of revelation arises the distinction of persons. But in respect that God, as God, is man, or rather as God dwells in a divine or deified man, there is in that man something which belongs to God, and is His own, and is not common to the creatures, and which originally and essentially exists in Him, independently of the creatures; and this it is God's will to have exercised, for it exists only for action and use, and what else can it be for? Were it altogether inactive it would be good for nothing, and without works or activity it could not be said that God existed.

The two chief definitions which the "German theology" derives from the idea of the perfect, and applies to *God*, are, that He is the all-comprehensive *Being*,[3] and that He is the *chief Good*.[4] The two, however, coincide;[5] for all real existence is as such good, and all good is essentially and truly existent. The Perfect is not this or that,[6] is not here or there, is not to-day or to-morrow; it is always and everywhere, without limit or place, over all things, and all things in itself. Were God something, this or that, He would not be all in all and above all, as he is, and so would not be the true perfection. Whatsoever exists without

[1] Kap. 29, s. 42.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "God is the *being of all beings*, and the life of all that live." Kap. 34. s. 49.

[4] Kap. 55. s. 88.

[5] Kap. 42. s. 70: "All beings are essentially one in the perfect being, and all good is one in that which is one, and without that one nothing can exist."

[6] Kap. 30. s. 43.

being one, is not God,[1] and whatsoever exists without being all and above all, is likewise not God. Accordingly, it may be said with truth[2] that all is one and one is all in God. No less does it behove us to recognize in God, as the all perfect Being, the supreme, and eternal Good. What is it, says the German theology,[3] which is God's, and pertains to Him as property? It is everything which justly is, and may truly be called and pronounced good! So, when a man thus cleaves to that which is best among the creatures, so far as it can be recognised, and adheres to it, without cheating himself, he advances to something better, and thence to better still, and there is a progress from stage to stage, until he knows and tastes that the eternal One is a perfect good, without measure or number, and exalted above all created things.

From these fundamental notions the rest of the system follows. God being the all-comprehensive Being, the one and all, *all things have their true substance or being only in God.* They are more really in God than in themselves,[4] hence, also, in respect of their existence, they are good and well-pleasing to God. All that exists, it is said, is good, so far as it exists. Even the devil is good, so far as he exists. In this sense, nothing is evil or bad.[5] And to the question, What is paradise? the following answer is given.[6] Paradise is all that exists. For all that exists is good, and pleasant, and agreeable even to God, on which account it is, and is well-called, paradise. But it also follows from the same principles, that whatsoever is out of God loses thereby its true being and essence, and falls into nonentity, and that rational creatures, according to the higher part of their nature, and because the perfect is only communicable to those who perceive and feel it, can only be in God in as far as they inwardly embrace and live in him. Here accordingly, as a necessary complement, the idea of the chief good, and with reference to the rational creature, the requirement of *knowledge* and sentiment, but above all, of *love*, must be added to mere *existence.* That which is best ought also to be dearest, and, if we pursue

[1] Kap. 44. s. 73.
[2] Kap. 44. s. 74.
[3] Kap. 55. s. 88.
[4] Kap. 45. s. 74.
[5] Ibid. comp. Kap. 34. s. 49: "That the devil or man is, lives, and such like, is all good, and by God's will."
[6] Cap. 47. s. 76.

after it, the one eternal Good ought to be supremely and solely loved.[1] In this sense, God loves in the first instance himself, not, however, as himself, but as the one true and perfect Good.[2] For even in the love of God, and just in it as the highest sort, there is neither "I," nor "my and me," nor "thee and thine," and such like, but the light perceives and knows a good which is all and above all good, and for that cause loves it. Were one to ask of love,[3] What lovest thou? she would say, That which is good; and to the question, Why? she would answer, Because it is good, and for its goodness' sake, and it is right and proper to do so. And if there were any thing better than God, it would require to be loved above God. Hence God loves not himself for self's sake but as good, and did there exist, or did God know, anything better than God, he would love it and not himself. Thus all that is of self, self-love and self-will, are absent from God, and there belongs to him nothing, save what is requisite to constitute his personality,[4] that is, the difference of persons. In the same way, the rational creatures ought also to love God, and to love him as supremely good, and for his goodness' sake.[5] For they who have regard to any thing else in their love, are not true lovers, but only hirelings, and cannot experience the blessedness of the pure love of God.[6]

Accordingly, it is man's destination that, being naturally, by virtue of his very existence, in God, he should also be in him with knowledge, sentiment, and love, and that in such a way as, after the pattern of God himself, to put off, in his love of God, all self and self-love or will, so as to love God for God's sake, or because he is the chief good, and therefore worthiest of being loved.[7] The man who thus acts is good and happy, and has heaven within him. If, however, he disconnect himself from God in his consciousness and love, although even like the

[1] Kap. 30, s. 44. [2] Kap. 41, s. 66. [3] Kap. 30. s. 44.
[4] Kap. 30, s. 45. [5] Kap. 37, s. 53, 54.

[6] "A lover," says the German theologian, cap. 37, s. 54, "is better and dearer to God than a hundred thousand hirelings." What is true of love to God, is true also of Christ and of his life. "He who has the life of Christ, in order that he may possess or *merit* something, has it as a *hireling*, and not from love, nay, cannot be said to have it at all." Kap. 36, s. 52.

[7] Kap. 30, s. 44.

devil,[1] still continuing, by virtue of existence, in him, and become absorbed in self, he is evil and carries hell in his bosom.[2] For apostacy from God and the assumption of self is sin, and sin is the only thing which actually and necessarily must separate the creature from God[3]. The idea of sin is developed in various ways in the German theology.[4] The author starts with the proposition, that nothing is good save in proportion as it is in God or with God. Now, it is true that all things exist in God, for he is the essence of all that exists, and the life of all that lives.[5] Still creatures endowed with a will may, by action, separate from God, and make self the centre of their being, and that is sin.[6] This the author expresses in a variety of ways: It is sin, when the creature wills differently from or contrary to God,[7]—when it apostatizes from the Creator,[8] —when it is without God (for to be *without* is to be also *against* God),[9]—when it inclines itself to disobedience, to Adam, to nature, to egotism, selfishness, and self-will. For to speak of Adam, and disobedience, and the old man, of egotism, selfishness, and self-will, of "I," "my," nature, false light, and the devil, is virtually to speak of one and the same thing. All of these are contrary to, and without God, and therefore they are sin.[10] Accordingly, so long as man is in Adam, that is in mere nature, he is without God, and for that reason also contrary to God. But to be contrary to God is to be dead with respect to him. In this sense the "German theology" teaches,[11] that man, as child of Adam, and in virtue of what he is or owns, is nothing, and can do and possess nothing[12] but vice and wickedness, and consequently,

[1] Kap. 34, s. 49. K. 45, s. 74.

[2] Kap. 47, s. 76.

[3] Kap. 41, s. 67. K. 34, s. 49.

[4] Chief passages: Kap. 2, s. 3. K. 14, s. 19. K. 34, s. 49 and 50. K. 41, s. 69. K. 42, s. 70. K. 45, s. 74.

[5] Kap. 34, s. 49. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid.

[8] Kap. 14, s. 19. [9] Kap. 22, s. 70.

[10] Kap. 41, s. 69. Comp. K. 34, s. 50. K. 20, s. 27: "Egotism and selfishness all belong to the devil, and for that reason he is a devil."

[11] Kap. 24, s. 32.

[12] Comp. Kap. 33, s. 48: "Creature as creature is or has of itself nothing."

that in order to be transplanted from the state of disobedience into that of obedience and into God, he requires to be quickened by God, and stands in need of divine grace. Divine grace, however, does not act compulsorily but freely,[1] for it is the property of God that he does not constrain any one by force, but leaves him to do or not to do, according to his pleasure, either good or evil, and the recovery is accomplished by divinely appointed means and according to a fixed method.[2]

The duty generally to which man must be called is, Divest thyself purely and entirely of self, and thereby thou wilt attain unto God.[3] The way by which this is effected passes through the stages of *purification*, *enlightenment*, and *union*.[4] The chief means is the *appropriation* of the pure, holy, and divine *life of Christ*.

It is involved in his nature that a man seek what is his chief good, and God on his part is willing to help him in finding it.[5] So long, however, as he seeks the chief good as his own, and with his own will, he never can attain to it, but departs farther and farther from God and the true good. Whosoever loves his soul, that is, himself, and is determined to keep it, whosoever seeks himself and his own in external things, will lose his soul. The best thing for man is not to seek or study self or his own.[6] This God says and teaches, and whosoever desires that God shall help him to the chief good, must follow God's word and command, and he will be helped, but not otherwise. The doctrine and power of God, however, are presented to us chiefly in the *life of Christ*.[7] In him sin, egotism, self-will, and disobedience, in short, all that has come into the world by Adam, are annihilated, and, on the contrary, perfect obedience and complete unity with God restored.[8] In Him divinity is humanized and humanity deified.[9] He is devoid of all egotism, self-love,

[1] Kap. 31, s. 46. K. 50, s. 82.

[2] Kap. 24, s. 33 and 34. [3] Kap. 20, s. 27.

[4] Kap. 12, s. 16. Ibid. "Know this, that no man can be enlightened, until he have been previously purified, cleansed, and emptied; and no one can be united with God, until he have been previously enlightened."

[5] Kap. 32, s. 47. [6] Ibid.

[7] Kap. 52, 53, s. 83—86. [8] Kap. 55, s. 87.

[9] Kap. 3. s. 4. Comp. Kap. 22. s. 29.

and self-will, and such like. He stood so purely in the love of truth and goodness, that, like God himself, he never asked *why*,[1] but loved what was good purely for its goodness' sake. For just as the sun, were it to be asked, Why dost thou shine? would answer, Because I must, and cannot do otherwise; shining is my property, and belongs to my nature, so is it with God and Christ, and with all that is divine and belongs to God, they will and desire nothing otherwise than as good and for its goodness' sake, and beyond that they do not enquire. The life of Christ is the noblest, best, and worthiest life. There is no other so good in itself or so dear to God;[2] on which account it must be loved and extolled above all lives; and this was and still is in Christ in complete perfection, for otherwise he would not be Christ.[3] To know and understand the life of Christ, is to know and understand Christ himself,[4] and on the contrary, he does not understand Christ who does not understand his life. Whoever believes in Christ, believes that his life is the noblest and best, and he who does not believe that, neither, also, believes in Christ. In the same measure in which the life of Christ is in a man, is Christ also in him; and according as there is little of the one, there is little of the other. When obedience, the new man, genuine love, and Christ's life, are spoken of, one and the same thing is meant. Wherever there is any of these, there, also, are the rest; and if one be wanting, so are all. For they are all truly and essentially one.[5] As the life of Christ, whenever rightly understood, is also necessarily loved, and loved for its own sake as being the best and noblest,[6] all depends upon how that life is understood. But let no one suppose[7] that he can attain to this true light and knowledge by much asking or hearsay, or reading and study, or great and lofty arts and sciences, or strength of natural reason. Christ says:[8] "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Accordingly, all depends upon really being what Christ was,[9] and humbly and devoutly appropriating his

[1] Kap. 24. s. 36.
[2] Kap. 16. s. 22 and 23.
[3] Kap. 41. s. 68.
[4] Kap. 43. s. 71 and 72.
[5] Kap. 43. s. 72.
[6] Kap. 16. s. 32.
[7] Kap. 17. s. 23 and 24.
[8] Ibid. s. 24.
[9] Kap. 19. s. 25.

life. In this way we shall also recognise it from experience as the best.

Now here a divine *method* has been prefigured by Christ himself. Many would fondly mount aloft at once, and without Scripture or law, enter into union with God. But wherever there are haughtiness and spiritual riches or pride, and a light unruly mind, there Christ cannot be, and as little his true follower.[1] The way lies through sincere humility, poverty of spirit, and fulfilment of the *law*. Wherever Christ is,[2] there must there first be genuine humility, poverty of spirit, and an abased heart that dwells within itself—for out-going is never so good but that in-dwelling were better,[3]—and such a heart should be full of secret and concealed grief and sorrow until the death of the body. In spiritual poverty and humbleness, however, man perceives that in and of himself, or what pertains to him, he is and can do nothing;[4] and hence it follows, that he deems himself unworthy of all that is done to him by God and the creatures, owns that God and the creatures are right to be against him, renounces all claim upon them,[5] and feels himself under obligation towards God and all the creatures, both to bear with and labour for them. Accordingly, such a man will subject himself to government and law, for few have attained to the truth without commencing first with rule and method, and exercising themselves in these, knowing at the time no other or better way.[6] As Christ did not neglect and despise the law[7] or those who lived under it, neither ought his true follower to do so. He embraces and practices it like others, for man must have something to occupy himself with while he lives. No doubt, the law is not of itself enough. He must advance beyond it. He must know[8] that all man's ability, his doing and leaving undone, his knowledge, art, and skill, are not the chief good, nor yet helps to attain it, but that here God must work within him. The great thing is entering into *union*.[9] But what is union? No-

[1] Kap. 24. s. 35.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Kap. 9. s. 10.
[4] Kap. 24. K. 32.
[5] Kap. 24. s. 32.
[6] Ibid. s. 33.
[7] Ibid. s. 34.
[8] Ibid. s. 32.
[9] Kap. 25. s. 37.

thing but[1] purely, simply, and with entire truth, to be at one with the simple and eternal will of God, or it is to be also devoid of will, or it is the created will's being fused and melted into the eternal will, and brought to nought, so that the eternal will *alone* wills and does or leaves undone. In this manner a true and inward life[2] takes its first commencement, and then in continuance God ever more and more becomes man, so that nothing is left save what is or belongs to God. Neither is there any arrogating to self, and the result is that in such a man God, that is, the eternal and perfect One, alone exists and lives, perceives and acts, loves, wills, does, and leaves undone. In this union, the inner man remains unmoved, while God permits the outer man to be moved hither and thither, in and towards that which must or should be and happen,[3] and if the natural man otherwise falsely makes to himself a necessity of a thing which is not such,[4] the deified man has here a necessity determined by the eternal will.[5]

This union with God involves the *life of Christ* in man. For Christ was perfectly one with God. His whole life was humility, poverty, obedience, submissive and active love, praise, and blessedness. It is true, there is always a distance between him and others, for the sense of innocence belongs to none but Christ.[6] But the man made one with God approximates to Christ. He is, to speak the language of other mystics, *Christiform.* The German theologian says, very characteristically:[7] Perhaps no man is so wholly and entirely in this obedience as was the case with Christ; still it is possible to come so near to it, or beside it, that a man is, and is said to be, divine and *deified.*

Not less does this union with God and perfect obedience imply the foretaste or *commencement of heaven.*[8] Hell is essentially self-will. There is more of that than of anything else there; and if it did not exist, there would be neither hell nor devil.[9] On the other hand Paradise and Heaven begin where self-will ter-

[1] Kap. 25, s. 36. Compare K. 54, 55, s. 86 sq.
[2] Kap. 55, s. 87. [3] Kap. 26, s. 37 and 38.
[4] Kap. 19, s. 25. [5] Kap. 26. s. 38.
[6] Kap. 38, s. 59. Compare K. 14, s. 19 and 20.
[7] Kap. 14, s. 21. [8] Kap. 11, s. 14.
[9] Kap. 47, s. 76.

minates. In and of itself, and in respect of mere existence, every thing is good and pleasing to God, provided it do not by self-will sever itself from Him. Hence all that exists is a suburb and vestibule of the eternal, and the creatures are but a directory and way to God and eternity.[1] Hence it may well be, and be called, a paradise; and within this paradise all that is contained is at our disposal, save one tree and its fruits, and that is self-will, or willing otherwise than the eternal will.

Finally, in union with God lies also *elevation above the Law.* Here, however, we must note well in what sense a man is really above all law, and in what not,[2] in other words, the *difference between true and false freedom, true and false light.* When he has travelled all the paths[3] that conduct him to truth, and exercised and fatigued himself therein so much and so long, that he now thinks the end gained, and that he has denied, and is dead to, himself, the devil then sows his seed in the heart, and out of it grow two fruits. The one is spiritual richness or pride, the other false and inordinate liberty, two sisters, who love each other and always dwell together. The way it happens is this. The devil inflates a man, so that he imagines he has reached as high and near to God as possible, and that henceforth he no longer needs Scripture or anything else. Hence there arise in him great peace and satisfaction, so that he says,[4] I am now exalted above all men, and know and understand more than the whole world, and hence it is proper and right that I should be a God to all the creatures, and that all the creatures, especially all men, should serve me. And inasmuch as this lofty spiritual pride imagines that it has no need of Scripture, or instruction, or anything of the sort, the whole discipline and order, government and law of the holy church, and even the sacraments are vilified and contemned, along with all who adhere to and are occupied with them.[5] Such is false liberty. Moreover this false light and ungodly free spirit will have nothing to do with conscience, saying[6] that it has attained to superiority over it, that whatever it does is well done, and that to pay any regard to *conscience is a folly and absurdity,*[7] corroborating this opinion by the example of Christ, he

[1] Ibid.
[2] Kap. 28, s. 40.
[3] Kap. 23, s. 30 sq.
[4] Ibid. s. 31.
[5] Ibid. s. 31 and 32.
[6] Kap. 38, s. 58.
[7] Ibid. s. 59.

having been without conscience.[1] The answer to this, says our Theologian,[2] is, that the devil also has no conscience, but is none the better for wanting one. Observe who those are who are destitute of conscience, either one who has wholly revolted from God like the devil, or one who knows himself to be innocent like Christ. Whosoever, then, is without conscience is either Christ or the devil. That is not, however, the case with man, for he neither is nor can become the one or the other. He must, accordingly, possess a conscience; and wherever he has the true light, there also is there a true and proper life, worthy and dear in the sight of God. And if it be not Christ's life in perfection, it is still formed after it, and Christ's life, with whatever pertains to honesty, good conduct, and all the virtues, is loved.[3] On the contrary, where there is the false light, man becomes inattentive to the life of Christ, and to virtue of every kind, and seeks only what is agreeable and pleasant to nature.[4] Knowledge is of no value without love,[5] and he only is a godly or deified man who is thoroughly penetrated by eternal and divine light, and inflamed with eternal and divine love.[6]

On the same principles, the question respecting the *obligation of the Law* is solved. If it be stated that man ought to rise above all government and discipline, precept and law, the statement, says the German theology, is partly true and partly false.[7] Christ was above all virtue, discipline, government, and such like: and so also is the devil, but with a difference. Christ was above them in the sense that all his words, works, and ways, all he did and all he left undone, in short every thing about him were not needful to him. He required them not on his own account, for whatever can be attained by these means is already in Christ. In this sense St Paul correctly says, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and are not under the law—that is, such persons require not to be taught what it is their duty to do or to leave undone, because their master, the Spirit of God, will surely teach them. And also in another sense, they need no law nor precept, viz., in as far as they purpose thereby to earn merit, or acquire some advantage for themselves, for all advancement on the way to eternal life

[1] Ibid. s. 59.
[2] Ibid. s. 59 and 60.
[3] Kap. 41, s. 67.
[4] Ibid. 38, s. 60.
[5] Kap. 39. s. 60 sq.
[6] Ibid. immediately before.
[7] Kap. 28, s. 40 and 41.

that can be attained or effected by such means, or by the help of the counsel, words, and works, of any creature, is already prepared for them. But as for the other thing, when men say,[1] that we ought to disregard and lay aside both the life of Christ, and all precepts, law, discipline, and government, and neglect and contemn them, this is falsehood and lying, and a liberty which comes from the devil. Accordingly he only who is made free by the life and Spirit of Christ, is truly free from the law, but free in obedience; whereas he who frees himself with levity and pride, and because he is averse to true obedience, is in the liberty of the devil.

In the foregoing remarks, we have indicated the main content of the "German Theology." There is nothing in all the little Book which *tends directly to the Reformation;* and yet, so mighty was the influence it exercised over the *Augustinian Monk at Wittemberg*, that in the preface which he wrote to it in 1516, he says, "This excellent little work, poor and homely in language and human wisdom, although it be, is in the same and even greater proportion, rich and precious in the skill and divine wisdom with which it is written; and to boast like an old fool, which I am, next to the Bible and St Augustine, from no book with which I have met, have I learned more of what God, Christ, man, and all things, are. And now for the first time I discover the truth of what certain great scholars reproachfully say of us Wittemberg theologians, viz., that we have novelties in our heads, as if there had never been in former times and elsewhere any men like ourselves." If, however, we enquire what actually produced this impression upon Luther, we partly receive the answer from himself, and partly may infer it from the nature of the case. In the first instance, it was the external charm of the German language which attracted him. It is true, he warns the reader not to take offence at the "bad German, and the unfringed and unornamented diction," but, at the same time, with the victorious consciousness of inward joy, he says, "I thank God that I now hear and find my God in the German tongue better

[1] Kap. 29, s. 41 and 42.

than I, or they along with me, have ever hitherto been able to do either in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew," and he confidently expresses the hope, that it will now be seen that "German Divines are the best." The German language, however, was replete—and there are few books shewing this more attractively than "the German theology"—with simple and child-like, but, at the same time, deep and overflowing German feeling, and this could not fail, directly and almost unconsciously, to affect a mind so susceptible as Luther's. But, without doubt, the effect is to be ascribed chiefly to the matter and whole drift of the work.[1] The sound, deeply Christian, and thoroughly moral spirit which animates it could not fail to quicken germs as yet dormant in the mind of Luther, and clear his convictions of much which had hitherto been dark. He learned from it better and better, "what God and Christ, man and all things, are." He found in it "many a charming distinction of one divine truth from another, and especially how, where, and with what, it is possible to ascertain the genuine and righteous friends of God, and the false and unrighteous free spirits, that are so hurtful to the Holy Church." He was more and more decidedly confirmed in the one great doctrine, "that men must set their confidence upon nothing but Jesus Christ alone, neither upon their works, nor their prayers and merits. For it is not by our own running that we are saved, but by the mercy of God." In this way, next to the Bible and St Augustine, Luther formed his mind chiefly after the Mystics, whom he decidedly preferred to the Schoolmen, without, however, blindly despising or indiscriminately rejecting these;[2] And among the mystics, those of his own country, Tauler and the German theology, occupied the highest place.

In point of fact, "*the German theology*," without the conscious-

[1] For this reason, in the postscript to the preface, Luther likewise calls the author "a wise, sensible, truthful, and righteous man," by whom, "as his friend," God has spoken.

[2] In this respect the statement of Luther in a letter to Staupitz, dated 31 März 1518 Nro. 60. Th. 1. s. 102 in de Wette is very significant: Idem de *scholasticis* doctoribus mihi conflant odium: quia enim illis praefero *Mysticos* et Biblia, paene insaniunt prae fervore zeli. Ego *Scholasticos* cum judicio, non clausis oculis (illorum more), lego. Sic praecepit Apostolus: omnia probate, quod bonum est, tenete. *Non rejicio omnia eorum*, sed nec omnia probo.

ness or expression of opposition, involves the most essential particulars in the *views embraced by the Reformers*, a circumstance which likewise explains why, since 1621, it has been inscribed in the Romish index of prohibited books, while on the part of Protestant, and especially Lutheran, divines, it has always been highly appreciated.[1] Let us combine into one view the chief points which here come into consideration. The German theology sets forth a living God, near to all, present and active in every place, but most intimately present and active in the soul of man. It therefore brings man to this God, in a relation which not merely is not outward or mediated by the priesthood and Church, works and exercises, but which is in the highest degree inward, free, and childlike, and vitally exercises the affections. In the same manner, it sets forth a living Christ,—a Christ whose person and life are the central object in the system of Christian faith,—a Christ to whom, as the Son of God become man and Saviour, and as the prototype and pattern of divine life in man, it refers every thing; and who in that respect must be embraced not merely in historical objectivity, as an article of faith, but, much more, as a principle of life; inasmuch as, according to the German theology, his highest and full significance lies in the fact, that he perpetuates and reproduces himself anew in humanity, and that his spirit and theanthropic life are transfused into the individual, and impart divinity to him.[2] Again, the German theology recognizes man, in his relation to God, as having been originally gifted by Him with the high nobility of a rational and free nature, but, at the same time, in his relation to Adam, as denuded of divinity, worthless and dead in himself, and standing in the utmost need of divine strength and grace. In his recovery and restitution, however, it lays the whole stress upon what is inward, viz., on the one hand, upon the communication through the medium of Christ, of God and His Spirit, and again, on man's part, upon

[1] Flacius places the author among the Testes veritatis prior to the Reformation, Catalog. Lib. xix. T. ii. p. 858. Joh. Arnd boasts in his preface that "it is the genuine and true theology which this theologian teaches."

[2] Comp. the summary by J. Arnd in der Vorrede zur d. Th.

poverty of spirit and humility, a change in the whole frame of mind, repentance, faith, and love. Through the whole book, the life-giving power, is not the letter but the Spirit, not the work but the disposition. It requires of man to strive after God and Christ, goodness and virtue, not for the sake of any reward or merit, but from the purest love, and because these are the highest, noblest, and most desirable objects. It wholly disapproves of the desire of reward as a principle of action; and with the heaven which is to be acquired by works, and exists external to man, contrasts the heaven which has its seat in the heart, consists in the union of its dispositions with God, commences already here on earth, and finds, in the course of a progressive deification, its consummation hereafter. It puts a high value upon knowledge, but everywhere unites it with love. It adheres to Scripture, but less to the external letter than to the spirit and substance. It conducts man, by Christ and his gospel, beyond the law and its works, while it knows that he must not frivolously and wickedly set himself loose from the law and the outward practice of virtue, but make his way through that which is legal to the attainment of evangelical freedom. At the same time it maintains a noble, spirited and positive course between scholasticism, with its predominant regard to pure theory, and a merely sentimental mysticism of love—between the literalness of a faith founded upon outward authority, and the false light of unscriptural and heretical idealism,—between the legal tendency of the dominant Church, and the antinomianism of the sects of the Free Spirit. That all this, built upon the foundation of St Augustine, whose disciple the German theologian openly confesses himself to be, was the stand-point of the Reformers, no one thoroughly conversant with the subject will deny.[1]

To this no doubt it may be objected, that the German theology has a *pantheistic* and *idealistic tendency*. Here, how-

[1] This at least was the light in which Luther himself regarded it. In his letter to Staupitz, 31. März 1518. Th. 1. s. 102 in de Wette, he says, that, *following the German theology* (which he ascribes to Tauler), he is teaching, ne homines in aliud quicquam confidant, quam in solum Jesum Christum, non in orationes et merita, vel opera sua; quia non currentibus nobis, sed miserente Deo salvi erimus.

ever, we must beware of looking too much with modern eyes. It is true that the Book does contain *elements of pantheism*. But its pantheism is not that of speculation, but of the inmost and deepest piety, bent on bringing God near to it, in the most vital way, spirit to spirit, and heart to heart. At the same time, it fully acknowledges his personality,[1] strictly maintains the distinction between God and the creature, and subjects itself to Him with the most childlike humility. Nor is it less true, that the German theology has a tincture of idealism. It often makes history an allegory, that which was meant objectively, subjective, and persons, symbols, as for instance, Adam and Christ respectively are, of the fall of man and of his union with God. At the same time, there is therein no intention of denying or disputing the historical and objective import of these things, but rather, with that unimpaired, of setting forth their inward universal and perpetual truth, and above all their typical and moral significancy for the whole of mankind.[2] The latter is a main point. The whole tenor of the German theology is pre-eminently *moral*.[3] The incarnation and redemption, the putting off of self and putting on of God, are for its author, not, as for Eckart, predominantly speculative, but thoroughly moral ideas. Without desiring to weaken the ideal and dogmatic import of Christianity, he takes it up in its ethical character and design, as a morally-creative faith, an institute of sanctification. It was in this view, as there can be no doubt, that Luther too understood and loved him, and in this view, the German theologian is completely a Reformer.

[1] Kap. 30, s. 45.

[2] We find the same also in Luther. For instance, let the reader only compare his ingenious spiritual interpretation of the cross of Christ (Brief 10. Th. 1. s. 29 in de Wette), which begins with the words: Crux Christi divisa est per totum mundum: unicuique sua portio obvenit semper.

[3] So likewise de Wette Sittenl. ii. 2, s. 250.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

PRACTICAL MYSTICISM. JOHN STAUPITZ. CONCLUSION.

We have traced the course of the mystical theology through its principal stages, and indicated its relation to the Reformation. It only remains to shew under what a simple but dignified and attractive guise, it came into contact with Luther in the person of *John Staupitz*. At the instigation of Staupitz, Luther had edited[1] "the German theology." But Staupitz was himself also the proximate living promoter of that theology of the heart, from whose maternal soil the spirit of the Reformer, like a giant oak, grew up. At the same time, he affords a representative of a form of mysticism distinguishable from the poetical, the sentimental, and speculative, we mean the practical, reduced to its simplest principles. Hence it is in every way proper that we should take a more distinct view of him.

John Staupitz[2] was descended from an ancient and noble family

[1] See the letter to Staupitz v. 31 März 1518, Th. 1, s. 102 in de Wette, in which the work referred to by Luther under the name of Tauler is nothing else but the German theology.

[2] The sources of information respecting the life of Staupitz are principally the letters and some passages in other writings of Luther, and then Sleidanus, Matthesius und Petri Albini Chronicon Misniae Tit. 25. Of subsequent and modern authors, comp. respecting him *Seckendorf* Commentar. de Lutheran. Lib. 1,sect. 7, p. 15. *Adami* Vitae Theol. edit. III. Francof. MDCCVI. p. 8—10. *Weismanni* Hist. eccl. T. I. p. 1399—1401. *Wernsdorf* de Primord. emend. per Lutherum relig. §. 10, p. 60. Knapp Nachlese von Ref-Urkunden IV. 468. *Gerdesii* Hist. Evange. renov. I. 153—157. Arnold K. u. Ketzer-Hist. Buch 16, K. 22 §. 24. Zedler Universal-lexicon u. Jöcher Gelehrtenlex, under the name Staupitz. Schroeckh K. Gesch. seit der Ref. I., 109 and 128. Spieker Geschichte Dr M. Luthers s. 175, and especially in the annotations s. 53—55. Uckert Leben Luthers I. 38 u. 39. In fine, and more especially *Goetze* Dissert. de Joh. *Staupitzio* 1724. J. Henr. *Stussii* Progr. de Joh. Staupitii meritis in relig. evang. Goth. 1732. *Laub* Observat. ad vitam Joh. a Staupitz illustr. Hafniæ 1832. *Geuder* Vita Joh. *Staupitii* Gotting. 1837. Car. Ludov. Wilib. *Grimm* de Jo. *Staupitii* in Sacror. christian. instaurationem merit. Jen. 1835. The same author in Illgens Zeitschrift für histor. Theologie 1837. B. 7, Heft 2, s. 58—126. Respecting his

in Meissen.[1] Free from ancestral pride, he endeavoured to distinguish himself by his own ability, and in order to live wholly for study and pious contemplation entered the Augustine order. At several different universities he acquired that discipline in scholastic philosophy and theology, which was customary at the time, and took his degree of Doctor in Divinity[2] with high approbation at Tubingen.[3] The conviction, however, that philosophy does not suffice for a full and vital knowledge of the truths of salvation, led Staupitz, like many at the same period, to the Scriptures, and the Scriptures to life. He saw that it is not mere knowledge which makes the theologian, but the whole inward frame of mind, and the confirmation by action of what is known, and thus he became a theologian of experience, a scriptural and practical mystic. His practical turn of mind, however, likewise qualified him for taking an able part in the business of the world, and in virtue of his birth, and the liberal education which as the offspring of a family of rank he had received, he was fitted for intercourse with the great. In 1503 the chapter at Eschwege elected him general Vicar; in 1511 he became provincial of Thuringia and Saxony;[4] and

residence in Salzburg, comp. *Gaspare* Chron. antiq. monast. S. Petri. Salisb .Aug. Vindel. 1772. Ejusd. Archiepisc. Salisb. res in Lutheranismum gestae, Venet. 1779 and *Schellhorn* de fatis eccl. evang. inter Salisb. p. 26. German translation, Leipz. 1732, s. 58—79.

[1] Du Pin traces back the nobility of the family somewhat too high, when he calls Staupitz, allié et amy de la maison de Saxe (*Weism.* hist. eccl. I. 1399). The arms of the family show a horn and a leaping stag. Respecting the family of Staupitz, see Grimm in Illgens Zeitschr. in l. c. s. 61—63.

[2] Of great learning, it is true, we find no traces in the writings of Staupitz, but as these were wholly of an ascetical character, there was also no opportunity for it. I shall only mention, that Gerson is quoted by him as "Christian teacher,"—Gerson's surname was Doctor christianissimus—and St Bernard, as "the sweet lover of God." It is probable that Staupitz derived his mysticism from their works.

[3] Respecting his residence there see Grimm in l. c. s. 63.

[4] About the year 1512, Staupitz also attended the Lateran Council in the name of the Archbishop of Salzburg. On this occasion (see Weismann in l. c. and Seckendorf s. 19), the following anecdote is related. Staupitz, when in Rome, heard of the prophecy of a Franciscan, that a hermit would attack the papacy. This he at first understood as meaning an actual hermit, but when Luther, (who is well-known to have belonged to the order of Augustinian hermits) arose, he recognised with surprise that he was this hermit, and mentioned to him the cir-

in 1515 general Vicar of the Augustine Order over all Germany. In this situation, by his talents, acquirements, eloquence, and prepossessing outward appearance, he earned the special confidence of his prince, the elector Frederick the Wise, who employed him with great success in embassies to different courts. Luther calls him "his Staupitz," and used to say of him, "That was a great man, not merely learned and eloquent in schools and churches, but also beloved and highly honoured at courts and by the great. He had a powerful intellect, an honest, upright, and noble disposition, without meanness or servility."[1] The ease and presence of mind with which he behaved in high circles, appear from the following anecdote.[2] One day, in the course of a sermon he was delivering, he had occasion to quote the genealogy of Christ according to Matthew, and stumbled at the Princes of the tribe of Judah. The Princes of Saxony, who had been at church, invited him to dinner at noon, when Duke John said, "Doctor, what was the matter with the gospel to-day?" To which Staupitz replied, "Most gracious prince! In my text to-day, I had three kinds of men to deal with. First, Patriarchs, who were easy to manage; then, Kings, about whom it was also possible to speak. But when I came to Princes, I found them quite different. They were very ill to handle, and confused me in my discourse." To which the Elector added with a smile, "Brother, if you wish to ask any more questions, Staupitz will be ready to answer you."

In administering the affairs of the monasteries, Staupitz evinced zeal and good intentions. As we see from the example of Luther, he took an interest in individuals, and treated them with consideration and love. On the whole, however, this employment seems to have given him little satisfaction. "During the first three years," as he once expressed himself to Luther,[3] "I wished to govern

cumstance. The story at least shows how wide-spread was the expectation that the papacy would soon encounter a vigorous assault.

[1] Matthesius 12te Predigt, s. 141. Luther's Werke xxii. s. 2289. To the same effect Maimbourg in Seckendorf B. 1, sect. 7, §. 6, s. 15: Erat hic vir ingenio pollens, magnae dignationis, industrius, eloquens, corporis forma conspicuus, multumque a Friderico, Saxoniae duce, aestimatus, a quo in consilium adhibebatur.

[2] It is related by Matthesius 12te Predigt, s. 141. Luther's Werke ii. 2062, and Adami Vita Staup. l. l.

according to rigid justice, but things would not proceed in that way; then, according to the rules and counsels of my predecessors, which also had no success; in the third place, according to the will of God, and with constant invocation of his name, but as little did this answer. At last, in despair of all other plans, I did what I could." Not being able to find select men to fill the monastic offices, he also said, "We must plough with the horses we have, and he who has none, must yoke his oxen.[1]" He experienced far greater success and satisfaction in the endeavours, which the friendly terms on which he stood with the Elector enabled him to make, for founding the University of Wittemberg. This college, destined to rise to such importance in the history of the world, was established in 1502. In founding it the Elector proceeded chiefly on the advice of Staupitz and Mellerstadt. The latter became the first Rector of the new institution, and the former the first Dean of the theological faculty. The office required him to foster the study of theology, and this brought him into intimate connection with Luther.

It was at Erfurt that they first became acquainted with each other. There Staupitz, during one of his visitations, had observed, in the Augustinian monastery, a young Brother, whose whole aspect bore the traces of sharp inward conflicts and rigid discipline, yet whose troubled looks could not altogether veil the great and ardent spirit that laboured within him. This was Luther, then engaged in an intense struggle for salvation and peace of mind. Staupitz approached him as a friend and father, lightened his situation by relieving him from the servile offices of the monastery,[2] procured for him greater freedom for the prosecution of his studies, directed his mind from unprofitable, self-tormenting thoughts and lofty speculations, to the atoning grace of God in Christ,[3] warned him against "making a sin out of every blunder,"[4] and also showed him how salutary all his con-

[1] Luther's Werke v. 2189. Staupitz deposed a prior, who was always complaining of the smallness of the revenues, and yet was secretly hoarding up wealth, observing to him, "You are no believer, and therefore it is impossible for you to govern a monastery well." Luther's Werke ii. 791.

[2] Seckendorf Lib. i. p. 21.

[3] Luther's Werke, ii. 264 and 65. xxii. 489 and 90.

[4] Luther's Werke xxii. 553.

flicts and temptations would be. "Dear Martin," he used to say,[1] "thou knowest not how useful and necessary for thee such temptation is. It is not in vain that God allots it to thee. Thou wilt see that he will use thee for great designs." Above all, Staupitz made Luther acquainted with the true, effectual, living, and sin-pardoning Saviour. The young monk should not fight with creatures of his fancy, but keep to solid realities. "You would fain," said Staupitz to him,[2] "be such a sinner as yourself have fancied and painted, and hence would have none but such a feigned and painted Saviour." And upon another occasion, when Luther was terrified at the sight of the Sacrament,[3] "Ah! your thoughts are not Christ, for Christ does not terrify but comfort." Luther's soul was comforted and uplifted by Staupitz's true and gentle consolation, and perceiving the unsatisfying nature of monkish legality, and the whole doctrine of law and works,[4] he now penetrated more and more deeply into the gospel of the grace of God in Christ, while, at the same time, his restless and ever-labouring spirit strove to advance to scientific certainty that fund of faith which he had acquired by the study of the Scriptures, the ecclesiastical Fathers, the better schoolmen, and the German mystics; And such was his success, that when it was proposed in 1508 to complete the plan of theological education at Wittemberg, Staupitz remembered his young friend at Erfurt, now twenty-six years of age, and called him as a fellow-labourer to his side,[5] appointing him, at the first, professor of philosophy, but, at the same time, anticipating that he would soon wholly enter the theological arena.

[1] Luther's Brief an Weller vom 6ten Nov. 1530, Th. 4, s. 187 in de Wette.

[2] Luther's Werke x. 2024 and 25. Comp. xxii. 553.

[3] Luther's Werke xxii. 724 and 513.

[4] Luther's Werke xxii. 583: "Dr Staupitz used to say, The *Law* of God says to men: There is a great mountain, and you must climb it. And so I shall, says the flesh in presumption. But you cannot, says conscience. Well, then, I will let it alone, replies despair. In this manner, the Law produces in man either temerity or despair."

[5] Melanchthon in vita Luth. ed Heumann p. 11: Eo autem tempore quia reverendus vir Staupicius, qui exordia Academiae Wittebergensis adjuverat, studium theologicum in recenti Academia excitare cupiebat, cum ingenium et eruditionem Lutheri considerasset, traducit eum Wittebergum anno MDVIII., cum jam ageret annum vicesimum sextum.

From that time Staupitz and Luther formed a mutual friendship, as close as the difference of their respective ages and positions in life possibly allowed. Under Staupitz's auspices, Luther was, in 1512, made doctor in Divinity. In a conversation with his friend in the garden of the monastery, Luther had declined the honour, calling himself "a weak and sickly brother," when Staupitz, in his usual pleasant vein, replied, "It is easy to see that God Almighty will soon have much to do both in heaven and upon earth. He will therefore require far younger and more industrious doctors to execute his work, than has hitherto been the case, and whether alive or dead you will be wanted for a councillor."[1] Staupitz is also made to play a part in Luther's attack upon *Indulgences*. Instigated either by the jealousy of his order against the Dominicans, who were preferred as agents for the sale, or in indignation at the abuses which took place, he is said to have been the first to complain to the Elector, and then to have employed the youth and vigour of Luther to prosecute the strife.[2] Staupitz may, nay, from the whole tenor of his conduct it is certain that he must, have thought in accordance with Luther. All that we know on the subject, however, proves that Luther acted quite an independent part, and from his own inward impulse. When, on the 30th of May 1518, he was defending the notion of penitence to which Staupitz had first directed his attention, and had sent to him his resolutions with respect to the Theses on Indulgences, in order that he might be so good as forward them to Leo the Tenth, he wrote, among other things,[3] "Not that I wish to gain you over as a partaker of the danger. All I have done, I desire to regard as done at my own risk. It is for Christ to see, whether that which I have said is his or mine." And in Augsburg, when he was called upon to answer for himself before Cajetan, Staupitz said to him,[4] "Remember, brother, that you have taken up this cause in the name of Jesus Christ." This

[1] The whole anecdote is related by Matthesius in his first sermon.

[2] So *Maimbourg* and *Cochläus*. A different account is given by *Seckendorf* Hist. Lutheran. L. i. sect. 7. p. 15. and sect. 19, p. 32, 33; and also by Schroeckh, in l. c. I. 128.

[3] Luther's Brief Nro. 67. Th. 1, s. 118.

[4] Brief Luthers an Staupitz Nro. 282. Th. 1, s. 541, in de Wette.

language points to quite different grounds for the procedure of Luther than the influence of Staupitz.

It is true that, at the first, in spite of his strict Catholicism[1] and milder temperament, Staupitz may have felt unmingled satisfaction at Luther's proceedings. Like him he was opposed to the Schoolmen, and built upon Scripture as the sole foundation. As early as 1512, he had abolished the practice of reading the works of Augustine at table in the monasteries under his jurisdiction, and had introduced the Scriptures in their stead.[2] Like him also, though averse to Scholasticism, he yet befriended the vigorous advancement of scientific education, and in common with Spalatin, urgently recommended to the patronage of his Prince the study of philosophy and the liberal arts.[3] In fine, like Luther, he was a Christian at heart, a theologian who in all things penetrated to the spirit and disposition as central, who if he did not reprobate outward legal works, said nothing about them or held them cheap, looked away from persons and desired glory to be given only to God and truth. With these sentiments, and to fortify Luther, he had said at the commencement of the contest, "It pleases me that in the doctrine which you preach, you give honour to God alone, and ascribe all to Him and not to men. For it is evident that in ascribing honor and goodness to him we can never go to excess."[4] With these sentiments, Staupitz, and the other counsellors of the Elector, accompanied Luther to Augsburg, in order to prevent his being condemned unheard, warmly took his part, and, during the transactions, did not shrink even from the displeasure of Cajetan.[5] In spite of all this, however, the time necessarily

[1] Even in the year 1516, in execution of a commission from the Elector, he had taken a journey into the Netherlands, for the purpose of collecting relics. *Matthesius* 1ste Predigt.

[2] *Adami* Vita Staupitii l. 1.

[3] "Dr Staupitz," says Matthesius in his Sermon, "Master Spalatinus and many good people, recommend the ancient languages, which are the best interpreters of God's word."

[4] Luther's Werke viii. 1678.

[5] Luther's Briefe an churf. Friedrich u. Spalatin Th. 1, s. 180 and 148 in de Wette. Also Stapitzens Brief an churf. Friedrich v. 15ten Oct. 1518 from Augsburg, in the treatise of *Grimm* in Illgens Zeitschr., in l. c. s. 122.

came when the paths of Luther and Staupitz separated from each other. Staupitz was not a Reformer in the strict sense of the term; his was not a heroic spirit. In spite of his practical turn, he was of a contemplative nature, a Christian mystic. All that he either said or did in this vein, was genuine truth, as every word of his writings and the great respect in which he was held avouch. But he would have fallen from his sincerity of character, had he thought of coming forward as a polemic. It was in his power greatly to animate and rouse the youthful hero and set him in the right course. But to take a place by his side, not only old age but the sure voice of his inward nature forbade. The farther Luther advanced as a reformer, the more must the modest Staupitz have felt alarmed and repugned; and when at length Luther broke with the church, he could not but inwardly break with Luther. Under these circumstances he had no alternative but quietly to retire from the field of combat. They did not however part in enmity, but as honourable and generous men, who though pursuing diverse courses, were yet at one in the inmost point, and could never cease to love each other.

At Augsburg, Staupitz had made the acquaintance of Matthew Lang, the learned Arshbishop of Salzburg, a keen, but at the same time, a cunning enemy of the Reformation. To this personage, who probably turned to him only the good side of his character,[1] he betook himself as court-chaplain. In Salzburg he changed his order, and joined the Benedictines. In 1522 we find him Abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of St Peter, under the name of John IV.[2] He also became the Archbishop's vicar and suffragan, a proof that he kept himself wholly within the ecclesiastical bounds. It is interesting to notice the *relation* still maintained between *him and L uther,* notwithstanding their outward separation. Staupitz seems to have been settled at Salzburg, so early as 1519, and in a letter dated the 20th

[1] See allusions to him in Grimm in l. c. s. 79.

[2] The Memoires de Trevoux ad ann. 1707. p. 975, state in an Itinerarium, that Staupitz entered this monastery in order to do penance for having occasioned the Lutheran disturbances. This, however, is refuted, not only by the false conception what it involves of the relation between him and Luther, but especially by the circumstance, that even in Salzburg, Staupitz continued on friendly terms, and in epistolary correspondence with the Reformer.

February of that year, Luther expresses the desire[1] he felt to see him again, tells him of his struggles and proceedings, and then adds the following words, which serve more than anything else to characterise, the discrepancy of his nature from that of his friend. "God drags, and drives, and carries me on. I have no power over myself. I wish to be at rest, and am hurried into the midst of the tumult." It was not long, however, before he became clearly aware of his inward alienation from Staupitz. On the 3d of October of the same year he wrote to him,[2] then far away, "You forsake me far too much. For some days I have been very sad on your account, like a weaned child for its mother. I adjure you, praise the Lord even in me a sinful man." Even in dreams his boding mind was occupied with his old acquaintance. "Last night," he concludes, "I dreamed of you. Methought that you were about to depart from me, that I wept bitterly and was much dejected, and that then you waved your hand as a sign for me to compose myself, for that you would return." Staupitz answered Luther kindly, and informed him of his welfare.[3] He even invited the much afflicted man to come to him at Salzburg, and that they would there live and die together.[4] In a very short time, however, Luther had to inform his friend of still greater commotions. He wrote to him:[5] "There is something prodigious before the door. What is coming, God only knows. I am carried away by these billows and wafted into the deep." Staupitz still passed outwardly for a patron of Luther. On this score he had been complained of by the Pope to the Archbishop of Salzburg;[6] and in a memorial had subjected himself to the Pope's judgment. Luther, on the other hand, exhorted him to be steadfast, and recall his timid submission. "Your submission," he says,[7] "has deeply grieved me, and shown me a

[1] Brief Luther's Nro. 123. Th. 1. s. 231 and 32 in de Wette.

[2] Brief 162. Th. 1. s. 340—43 in de Wette.

[3] Brief Luther's an J. Lange Nro. 182. Th. 1. s. 380.

[4] Staupitzen's Brief an Luther in dem Aufsatze v. Grimm in Illgen's Zeitschrift in l. c. s. 121.

[5] Brief an Staupitz vom, 14ten Jan. 1521. Nro. 282. Th. 1. s. 556—58.

[6] Staupitzens Brief an Wenc. Linck vom 4ten Jan. 1521, in Grimm s. 123.

[7] In a remarkable letter of great power, dated the 9th Febr. 1521. Nro. 292. Th. 1. s. 556—58.

different Staupitz from him who was once the preacher of grace and of the cross. . . . . This is no time to be afraid, but to cry aloud, when our Lord Jesus Christ is condemned and scorned. For that reason, as much as you admonish me to be humble, so much will I admonish you to be proud. You have too much humility as I have too much pride. . . The word of Christ is not a word of peace but of a sword." Nor, according to a letter, dated 27th June 1522,[1] could Luther approve of Staupitz's intention of again becoming Abbot ; nay, soearly as the 19th December of the same year, in writing to Wenceslaus Linck,[2] he delivers a still harsher judgment upon his friend : "I cannot comprehend Staupitz's letter ; only I see he has lost all spirit, and does not now write as he was wont once to do. The Lord be pleased to call him back." Luther, however, was far too true-hearted to give up his old friend and spiritual Father, and, on the 17th Sept. 1523, shortly before Staupitz's decease, which took place on the 28th Dec. 1524,[3] wrote to him in the kindest and most affecting terms.[4] "Even though I may have forfeited your good opinion and love, it does not become me to forget or be ungrateful to you, *through whom the light of the Gospel first began to shine out of darkness in my heart.*" And then, after urging how questionable his position was in the vicinity of a Cardinal Archbishop, who was so zealous a Catholic, he adds, "I, at least, with my former knowledge of you, perceive an irreconcilable contradiction in your being the same person you once were, if you continue in your present connection, or if you are the same person, in your not meditating to withdraw." At last, after expressing confidence in the continuance of their ancient friendship, he concludes, "I will never cease to wish and pray, that you may be as much estranged from your Cardinal and the Papacy as I myself am, and as you also once were." By inviting Staupitz to Salzburg it may have been the Archbishop's

[1] Nro. 411. Th. 2. s. 214 in de Wette.

[2] Nro. 444. Th. 2. s. 265 in de Wette.

[3] On the 18th of January 1525, Luther writes to Amsdorf: "After a very short reign (as Abbot and Episcopal Vicar), Staupitz has departed this life." Luther's Briefe Nro. 664. Th. 2. s. 616 in de Wette. See Staupitz's epitaph in Grimm in l. c. s. 84.

[4] Nro. 530. Th. 2. s. 407—9 in de Wette.

design to separate him from Luther, to withdraw from the Reformer Staupitz's name and patronage, and thereby to give the Reformation itself the most severe blow. The result, however, was quite the reverse. Left to himself, Luther acted all the more boldly, and Staupitz, far from refusing him his former sympathy, brought his writings to Salzburg, and left behind him at death a reformatory tradition, which serves partly to explain the religious movements which subsequently occurred in that district.[1]

The important statement which Luther makes in the foregoing letter, that through Staupitz the light of the gospel first arose in his heart, reminds us of our chief object, which is to observe how *Staupitz* could be what he was *to Luther*, and by his doctrine and opinions help to advance the *Reformation*. Besides several *letters*,[2] we possess three *considerable works* from his pen, one On the sweet Love of God, written in 1518, another On the holy Christian Faith, and a third On the Imitation of the voluntary death of Jesus, of the year 1519,[3] to which we have to add another, not as yet known to me by personal inspection, a treatise on Predestination.[4] The very titles

[1] Schulze Auswanderung der evang. Salzburger. Gotha 1836. s. 11.

[2] They are collected by Grimm in Illgens Zeitschrift in l. c. s. 116—126, and are ten in number, only one of which is to Luther.

[3] These works were published by John Arnd, and after him repeatedly. For the treatises on the Love of God and Christian Faith, I use the edition of Arnd, Strassburg by Ledertz 1624, for that on the Imitation of Christ, the Luneburg edition of 1630.

[4] Respecting this Treatise, see the literary notices in Seckendorf Hist. Luth. Supplem. ad Indic. i. historic. c. 75. ed. Nurnberg 1517 translated into German by Scheurl, ibid. 1517. Comp. (von der Hardt) Antiq. liter. monum. autogr. Lutheri aliorumque i. 60, 73, iii. 2. In a volume of old pamphlets belonging to the library of the University of Tübingen, (communicated to me by the goodness of Dr Baur,) of which several treat ecclesiastical subjects, there is a little essay occupying five leaves in small quarto, entitled Decisio quaestionis de audiencia misse in parochiali ecclesia dnicis et festivis diebus. The brief preface, addressed to the printer Johann Othmar (accuratissimo librorum impressori), and which contains the beautiful motto: Fit sapidius veritatis ipsius nectar bibitum absinthio praegustato falsitatis, is written by Frater Johannes de Staupitz Augustinianus, and dated Tuwingen. Anno salutis nostre 1500. Die penultima marcii. Whether the Treatise itself is from the pen of Staupitz is never once distinctly said.

of these treatises suffice to show what were the chief points of view in the theology of Staupitz, and that, while on the one hand, he embraced the traditional mysticism, he, on the other, placed in the centre of his system those fundamental thoughts and sentiments of Christianity which also constituted the centre in that of the Reformers. His views were Paulino-Augustinian, but modified by mysticism.

At the end we only read: Vale optime lector. Atque quaestionis p. veritate vidūdum decisionem patienter legas. parti adherendo saniori veriorique.

Ex Tubingen Anno 1500.

Of the qualities which peculiarly distinguished Staupitz, viz., a spiritual bent, child-like simplicity of mind, and a tinge of practical mysticism, there is not in this disquisition a single trace. The whole refers to ecclesiastical matters of an external kind, and is composed in the current scholastic form, with reasons, counter-reasons, and appeals to the most distinguished teachers, Joh. Gerson, Gabriel Biel, Scotus, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventura and others, and to canonical law; so that it may well have proceeded from some other author, and only have been printed by Staupitz. The only thing which corresponds with his character, is the gentleness and liberality expressed in the tract. This, however, is not sufficient to justify the ascription of its authorship to him, but merely that of its publication. At the same time, it is conceivable, that Staupitz, especially at an earlier stage of life, may sometimes have expatiated in such a scholastic and canonical field as this. The matter of the essay is as follows: The question mooted is, Whether the parishioners are, by the laws of the Church, bound to hear mass on Sundays and Festivals in their own parish churches? The point is debated with arguments for and against. Towards the end, however, the following propositions are laid down. *Conclusio tertia:* "It is reasonable and proper that the parish priests shall not lightly condemn those under their care, who may, on the appointed days, hear mass out of their own parishes, and thereby perform the due service to God. The reason is, because the obligation to hear mass under specific outward circumstances (cum positivis circumstanciis), is founded on positive law, which always admits of reasonable excuses." *Conclus. quarta:* "They act in a dangerous way who supply the people with frivolous excuses for absenting themselves from the mass in the parish church on appointed days." *Conclus. quinta:* "It is an error to suppose, that for any cause, however slight, and having no reference to the divine worship, the parishioners are absolved from their obligation to the Church; for every cause does not invalidate the reason of the law, and when that stands, so also does the law." Convenience, or personal inclination, ought not here to be an excuse; the only one is necessity. In general, however, the rule is established, That, unless pressing reasons to the contrary exist, parishioners are bound to hear mass in their own Church.

The basis from which Staupitz deduced his whole doctrine was, according to the manner of all mystics, *love*,[1] the love of God from which, through Christ as the medium, the love of man is kindled. God is above all things lovely, the essentially and intrinsically excellent love, and as such, supreme perfection. This love which renders amiable every object on which it lights, must be loved for its own sake, and above all. It is the purest and highest sort of love, including all adoration and true worship of God, all piety and prayer, and being a matter of experience, a man cannot learn it of others, nor by his own natural understanding, nor from the letter of Scripture. The letter of the Old Testament teaches mere law and punishment, and possesses worth only in so far as it conceals within it the Spirit and Christ, and is a stretch from nature to grace, and from self to the spirit. But the mere letter of the New Testament also slays, all the more that it brings Christ before the eyes, and his doctrine into the ear, but not his Spirit into the heart. The true teacher of divine love is the Spirit of the Heavenly Father and of Christ, by whom love is shed abroad in our hearts. God himself, who is love, must take up his abode in the soul, which thence derives strength to do all things, and to keep all the commandments. From this indwelling of the Holy Spirit arises the light of Christian faith, which cannot be attained by the outward study of the Scriptures. From the same source also flow true hope and well-grounded consolation, which we cannot build upon our own works, as, for instance, our love to God, but only on God's love to us, and upon that which he works within us. The love of God is formed in our hearts by Christ, in whom God's unspeakable love to us has been manifested. He is the rock in which the kindling spark of love slumbers, but it does not break forth until elicited by the stroke of the iron, which is the Holy Spirit. But when God strikes the rock in the heart of the elect, fire is emitted, the dead coal becomes alive, the black cinder glows like gold. Love is thus the offspring of love, and our reciprocal love of God of God's love towards us. In this love there are also degrees, and we can distinguish the initiative, the growing, and the perfect. The perfect man

[1] What follows has been taken, as far as possible, in Staupitz's own words, from the little book "Von der holdseligen Liebe Gottes."

is detached from self, and from all things and creatures. Foregoing all volition and action of his own, he waits only for what God says and does within him, and adheres so closely to God that he is said to be one spirit with Him. The degrees of divine love have a certain order among themselves; but God does not always confer them according to that. It is true that the love of God is, above all things, an enduring operation, still it does not always remain at the same pitch, but is more or less, according as God sees it to be useful for the person who is its object. Man requires occasionally the withdrawal of love, that he may be made conscious of his weakness, and recognize the only Saviour in God, and magnify Him alone; but all things must work for the good of the elect, who are Christ's. Christ belongs to God without mediation, but we, through Christ. Through Christ the elect soul is on such friendly terms with God, that evil, yea, even sin itself, is not merely innocuous, but subservient to its advantage. We ought not, however, to think that on that account we may commit sin. On the contrary, it behoves us at all times to flee from sin with the utmost diligence, for to cover sin with mercy is a work which belongs to God alone. A true mark of the love of God is the fulfilment of his commandments, for love breeds conformity, and makes one heart, one will, and one mind between the lover and the loved. But the surest mark of the true lover of God is, that nothing but God is allowed to dwell in his mind, and all creatures are expelled. If this be the case—if he be set loose from the creatures, forget his own life, merit, and safety, and seek only the honour and the will of God—God is doubtless within him, and he is "full of God."

Faith[1] is due in all rightful things, even by one honest man to another, how much more then do we owe it to God and his word, which is truth itself! All understandings must yield themselves captive to it; and all hearts side with it, be the things as high as they may. The divine promises are contained and guaranteed in Christ. Believe that he is the Son of God, and never doubt, or desire at least to believe steadfastly in Him, and thereby thou art blessed in Him. Those who believe in Christ, in whom God has put His word, being taught by God, need no other teacher of faith,

[1] From the Treatise "Von dem *heiligen christlichen Glauben.*"

may assure themselves of their predestination to eternal life, are justified and renewed, and obtain forgiveness of sin, to which neither confession, nor penitence, nor any work of man, can help them, but only faith in Christ. Without Christ there is no true virtue, reason, or good intention. In Him all sin, if followed by repentance, is pardonable. They who are born of God are protected from sinning by virtue of this birth, and not by their virtue, intelligence, or strength of mind. Faith in Christ allows no man to continue in himself, but raises him higher, and never rests until it unites him with God. In the first place, it unites believers with one another, in such a way that in God they all acquire one heart and soul; and thence arises the unity of the Church. Secondly, God unites believers with Christ in such a way that they become one body with him, he being the head and they the members, and by means of this union Christ sheds his spiritual gifts, yea even himself, into our hearts. Finally, there is still another and higher union, in which God gives the believer to Christ in wedlock, so that they become inseparably one. This is the marriage of paradise. It is the sacrament and seal, that Christ has taken from us all our sins and infirmities, and has in their stead become to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, not externally but within us.

Whoever is in Christ through faith, makes it his business to *imitate him*, first in his life, and then particularly in his sufferings and death.[1] This is the subject of Staupitz's third work, dedicated to a Countess Agnes of Mansfeldt and Heldrungen,[2] and in which he shews "How a good man being subjected to the necessity of dying, should deport himself, in order to give to Christ a voluntary life, passion, and death, in return for his suffering and dying." Here he mainly illustrates the ideas of Paul, that death entered the world by sin, that from the first transgression sin spread itself over the whole race, that Christ has vanquished sin and death, and that his passion and death, to which the victory is due, have also become to us a pattern of how we should suffer and die. "Die like Christ," says Staupitz,[3] "and without doubt, you will die a good and blessed death. Let all

[1] From the work, "Von der Nachfolgung des Willigen Sterbens Christi."

[2] See the short preface to the work.

[3] Kap. 6.

who please learn from St Peter, or other saints, how to die, or observe how good men close their lives. I will learn the lesson from Christ and from none else. He is the pattern given me by God, according to which I am to act, and suffer, and die. He only it is, whom all men can follow, and in whom holy living, suffering, and dying, are prefigured to all, so that no one can act, or suffer, or die well, unless it be done conformably to him in whose death that of all others was swallowed up."

From this brief review of the theory of Staupitz, which is less profound than that of the "German Theology," and less poetical than that of Suso,[1] but distinguished by a pleasing simplicity and practical tendency, it will be evident to every intelligent person, in what respects *Staupitz* was a *reformer*, and how he was able to exert an influence upon *Luther*. The main points are as follows. Staupitz, although declaring that the mere letter of Scripture kills, evinces everywhere an endeavour to refer all truth[2] to, and infer all truth from, Scripture, when understood vitally and according to the Spirit. He will not have men but God only for his teacher, and finds the Word of God in the Scripture. In his view the centre of the Scriptures is Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer, the sole but universal patron. He builds all salvation upon a vital inward fellowship with him, and through him with God. "Jesus, I am thine, Save thou me," is the motto at the beginning and end of all his treatises.[3] Faith is to him the means of fellowship with Christ. By it alone are justification and renewal to be obtained, and from it only do truly good works proceed. Works are not

[1] A certain deficiency in these respects probably depends upon Staupitz's Sclavonian extraction, which is indicated by the concluding syllable of his name *(itz.)* It is obvious that at this period the Germans were predominantly the true mystics.

[2] Luther's Werke viii. 1786: "Dr Staupitz used to say: It would be doubtful and dangerous, were we to trust to our own strength; for it may easily happen to us to fail and go astray, even in that which we best know and understand. . . . It is therefore of the greatest necessity that we should study with diligence and all humility the *Holy Scriptures*, and that we should also earnestly pray that we may not lose the truth of the Gospel!"

[3] Respecting this motto of Staupitz's, see M. G. Heinr. Götzen's Ordinations-Sermon über Dr J. Staupitzen's Leibspruch. Lübeck 1717. Weller, Altes aus allen Theilen der Geschichte ii. 276.

the cause of salvation,[1] but the signs of faith and election. The believer, standing in immediate fellowship with God, cleaves not to the Saints but to Christ. Even participation in the benefits of the Church is procured through Christ, and not inversely, an interest in Christ through the Church; for the unity of the Church is founded upon the previous union of all believers in God through faith.[2] Thus it is that all proceeds from Christ and the appropriation of his life and spirit in faith and love. In all these points Staupitz is evidently a reformer, and was not only competent to make, but could scarcely fail in making, a permanent impression upon Luther. There was, however, one particular as to which that impression was peculiarly deep. It lay at the very heart of the Lutheran piety and theology, and was the doctrine of *repentance* and the knowledge of its true nature. Luther himself tells us this, in the highly remarkable and important letter[3] with which he accompanied the transmission of the Resolutions to Staupitz. He here writes, that Staupitz had once taught him the true nature of repentance, in a way he would never forget, and as if with a voice from heaven, viz., that only that repentance is true, which begins with the love of righteousness and God, and that what the common teachers represent as its issue and completion is rather its mere commencement. "This word of thine stuck in my breast, like the sharp arrow of a mighty one. I began to compare it with the texts of Scripture on the same subject, and behold they all corresponded beautifully with your meaning, so that whereas formerly nothing in Scripture sounded to me

[1] Staupitz had soon and thoroughly understood the insufficiency of human works and virtuous exertions. According to Luther he was often wont to say, "I have vowed to our Lord God more than a thousand times that I would live a godly life, but I have never kept my vow. I will therefore make no such vow again, for I know that I will not keep it, and therefore unless God be gracious, and, for Christ's sake, vouchsafe me a blessed end when I am about to depart, I shall never be able to stand with my vows and good works, but must perish." Luther's Werke viii. 2725.

[2] Vom christl. Glauben Kap. 10: "Faith in Christ allows no man to rest with and in himself, but raises him up and stops not until it unites him with God. First God unites all believers so that they come to have one heart and one soul in Him. . . *Hence arises the unity of the churches.*"

[3] Nro. 67, s. 115—18. It is dated the 30th May 1518.

more bitter than the word repentance, now nothing appeared to me sweeter or more pleasant. It is thus that the Divine doctrines acquire a charm, when we come to read and understand them not merely in books but in the wounds of our dear Saviour." Out of this the conviction grew up in Luther's mind that, in the matter of repentance, less depends upon what we do, upon our works and cold outward satisfactions, than upon a change of mind, as is even implied in the Greek term *μετάνοια*. And from this insight into the spiritual nature of repentance, arose his opposition as a reformer to *Indulgences*, since it was about the same time that the rumour of these being perniciously advertised for sale reached his ears. In this manner, Staupitz certainly exercised a most essential influence in bringing Luther forward. It was not, however, of that outward and direct kind, which many Catholic authors suppose, but indirect and deeply spiritual.[1]

But along with this undeniable intimate connection, we do not overlook the diversity of the two men. *Staupitz*, a sensitive, gentle, and earnest character,[2] gave forth his convictions exclusively in a devotional and mystical form. Luther, an energetic and aspiring spirit, is more addicted to scientific investigation, and applies the results of it at once to life and action. Staupitz's life is like a bright morning in spring; Luther's like a summer day, labouring with thunderstorms and tempests. We love to figure the one in his quiet cell, calm and contemplative; the other, in the presence of kings or crowds, boldly contending for the truth, and surrounded by admiring friends and obstinate adversaries. In the abstract view of things, Staupitz bases all upon love,

[1] It is only in this sense that Luther calls himself a *discipulus* of Staupitz, in a dedication of the first collection of his works, dated Trinity-day, 1518. Ukert Leben Luthers i. 70.

[2] Luther expresses this very strongly in a letter to Wenc. Linck, when returning to him one from Staupitz (7ten Febr. 1525), Th. 2, s. 624, in de Wette: Remitto Staupitium: *frigidulus* est, sicut semper fuit et parum *vehemens*. Certainly Staupitz was anything but *vehemens*, in comparison with Luther. But as to the *frigidulus*, I would not subscribe to it, at least not in reference to Staupitz's *writings*, which have much inward warmth. For the rest, Staupitz evinces great strength of mind, especially in reference to Luther and the Reformation, in a letter to Spalatin of the 7th Sept. 1518. See Grimm's Zusammenstellung der Briefe in l. c. s. 120.

Luther all upon faith. Staupitz reduces Christianity to the very simplest practical propositions in the doctrine of love; Luther deduces from the doctrine of faith a rich abundance of religious perceptions and theological ideas. The latter executed what the former planned and prepared; did what he foreboded or conceived. In spite of this difference, however, each of them was conscious to himself of good intentions, and hence, although the judicial course of events tore them asunder, they were still one in the inmost core of their Christian life, and could never wholly separate from each other.

The analogy between the spiritual development of Luther and that of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, is so close, that one might be tempted to compare the mutual relation between *Staupitz and Luther*, with that which obtained between *Gamaliel and Paul.* But the points of disparity would more than counterbalance those of coincidence. There can be no doubt that Gamaliel and Staupitz in so far agreed, that both were sincerely pious, and, according to the measure of their respective ages and stations, benevolent and liberal,[1] and that the influence which they exercised upon their pupils, presented no insuperable obstacle to their future and higher development. But, at the same time, we also meet with most essential differences. First, Gamaliel, although one of the better and more spiritual-minded of the class, was still a Pharisee, and consequently imbued with legality and legal erudition.[2] Staupitz, on the contrary, was of a self-reflecting and contemplative spirit. Living in the 16th century, Gamaliel would have belonged not to the reforming mystics, but to the nobler advocates of the hierarchy and scholasticism; whereas if born at the period of declining Judaism, Staupitz would not have been a Pharisee, but would have attached himself to the Essenes or some other of the contemplative sects. In the second place, both laid the foundation of an earnest and strictly pious disposition in the friends whom they trained. But here too, their relation to these presents, in so far, an essential difference, that Paul, with

[1] With respect to Gamaliel, see the beautiful observations of Tholuck in the theol. Stud. u. Krit. 1835, ii. 377 sq.

[2] His admirers called him the "Glory of the Law;" and it was proverbially said that "with him the glory of the Law went down." See Tholuckin l. c. s. 378.

his apostolical peculiarity, took a position of direct antagonism to the Pharisaical views of his teacher; whereas, on the contrary, Staupitz, although a monastic, occupied substantially the same ground as Luther. Staupitz was a pioneer and precursor of the Reformation; Gamaliel was not, in the same way, a forerunner of Christianity. Between Gamaliel and Paul there is a discrepancy in the main point itself; between Staupitz and Luther, notwithstanding the differences of their natures and stages of development, an inward unity of disposition and general tendency. Hence, thirdly, Gamaliel and Staupitz stand in totally different relations to the work to which their pupils respectively devoted their lives. Gamaliel, wholly impartial, will do no more than objectively tolerate the labours of the apostles, in order, as it were, to put to the test whether God and time would also confirm them. Staupitz, on the contrary, abets at heart the efforts of the Reformers, at the first praises and promotes them, and only draws back when the matter becomes too great for him, and the force of progress carries it beyond his nature and capacity. We must not, however, blame Staupitz for stopping at this point. The time required, either that he should himself be a hero, (and a heroic nature cannot be looked for in any on whom it has not been conferred by the grace of God,) or that, in the exercise of self-denial, he should enlist under the hero then actually on the field. This was a step which the modest Melancthon, being a younger man, might possibly take; not, however, Staupitz, who being Luther's senior, was accustomed to act towards him the part of a father, and in general was little calculated and at that time least of all disposed, for a combat with the world.

The mediæval Mysticism had accomplished its work. It had conducted its votaries out of the school into life, from tradition to Scripture, in Scripture to Christ, and in Christ to the Spirit, and to grace, faith, and love. It had exalted religious life to a higher potency, from works to dispositions, from outward worship to free love, uniting in the closest manner the Godhead with humanity. By this means it had powerfully stirred and warmed the minds of men, and at last kindled a vigorous and deeply-

seated piety in the hearts of those who were destined to give a new shape to Christianity, especially in that of the great Reformer himself.

Let us now weigh somewhat more minutely the general and deeply-influential *import* of this phenomenon.[1]

Christianity, viewed as it actually exists in the world, presents a twofold aspect; one objective, in as far as it is an aggregate of facts, doctrines, and ecclesiastical institutions, or generally speaking, a historical phenomenon; and another subjective, in as far as the data of history and fact enter the mind and heart, and become actual piety. On the former are based the union and steadfastness of the Christian religion and society; on the latter, the inward life of its members. The combination of both is requisite, in order to effect a well ordered and sound condition of the Christian body. In consequence, however, of the imperfection of human things, it generally happens that the one or the other predominates, and that only on singular and great occasions, they are to be found proportionally mingled. In the *middle ages*, the *objective tendency* manifestly prevailed. Christianity was a Divine revelation, an outward object, a church and authority, and thence arose the taste for organization and magnificent construction which distinguished the Ecclesiasticism of that period. This condition had its own great and essential importance. It contributed first to the establishment and preservation of Christianity amidst the wild commotions and storms of the age, and, secondly, to the training of the nations in morality, and in an increase of union, involving their mutual influence upon each other. It had, however, its dark side, which was this, that subjectivity was deprived of its rights, and that the individual, when he wished to enforce them, was oppressed, and, if necessary, annihilated. The objectivity and unity which prevailed, were not truly free or substantially spiritual, but, in a great measure, forced and external. The nature of Christianity and the constitution of the human mind, as devised by God, required that this should be changed. It behoved that the nations and that individuals, pervaded by the objective discipline of the middle ages, should also unfold their *free internalism*, their *subjectivity* and *individuality*, and Christianity vin-

[1] Comp. *Weissenborn* de momento, quod ad sacrorum instaurationem theologia mystica attulerit. Jen. 1825.

dicate itself, not merely as authority, but as spirit, power, truth, and self-conscious conviction. This enormous revolution was partly effected on a great scale, and partly commenced by the *Reformation*. Before the Reformation, however, and as paving the way for it, it had already taken place partially, and to a certain extent, by means of *mysticism*, and especially in Germany; for the mysticism of that country in all cases esteemed liberty an invaluable good, and the chief blessing of spiritual life, and from this inward sense of freedom and independence, nurtured in many of its disciples a boldness not inferior to that of the Reformers. This effect is manifested in points of the greatest importance.

In the first place, in the great intellectual antithesis of the middle ages between *Scholasticism and Mysticism*, the former is manifestly enlisted for the most part upon the objective, and the latter for the most part upon the subjective side. The one handles Christianity more as a doctrine and revelation, and in this complies with the authority and power of the Church; the other deals with it as spirit,—a frame of mind, an inward life, and almost everywhere withdraws to a certain degree from the church. In Scholasticism a fixed and traditional idea bears rule; in Mysticism a versatile feeling, if not a wholly unbridled fancy. This introduction of Christianity into the inner world, in contrast with the progressively increasing externalisation of Scholasticism, belongs to the Reformers in common with the Mystics, but they are protected from the false internalism and wilfulness, into which the Mystics often sank, by the objective standard which they bring along with them in the Scriptures, and which in their day was placed much more decidedly in the foreground, interpreted according to the rule of the general doctrine of the church, and thus became the regulator of all that was subjective, and the barrier against all that was fanatical.

With this is connected a second point, viz., the deep, and, as it may even be called, the Protestant antagonism in which mysticism stands to the *hierarchy*. Wherever the objective rules exclusively in the ecclesiastical body, the Church, or the hierarchy who represent it, are looked upon as the only procuring means of man's relation to God, and eternal salvation. This was the case in the middle ages, as it still is in Catholicism. The

hierarchy and priesthood place themselves between God and man, and maintain that the priestly agency of the church is the only channel through which the graces of God and of heaven are continually conveyed to the race and the individual. Not so the mystic. He turns in his inmost heart directly to God. He aspires even to become one with him. He is his own priest, altar, and sacrifice; and even although he may not reject or neglect outward sacerdotal mediation, yet views it as a thing non-essential and subordinate. If, then, we express the antithesis of Catholicism and Protestantism by the well-known formula, —that the first says, Wherever the Church is, there also are Christ and the Spirit of God, while the latter says, Wherever Christ and the Spirit of God are, there also is the Church —then mysticism, when conscious of itself, manifestly takes its place in the ranks of the latter, and becomes essentially Protestant, by the fact that it derives sanctity, peace, and salvation, in their deepest root, solely from union with God and Christ, and not from the appliances and agency of the Church.

In the third place, the prevalence of the objective in the Church has always the accompaniment, that whatever is not dependent upon the subject and his state or frame of mind, becomes more prominent, and is esteemed more highly; whereas, on the contrary, all that is connected with or depends upon his subjectivity retires into the shade and is less prized. Hence, the infinite worth which, during the middle ages, was ascribed to holy *services*, to the whole established form of worship, especially to the Sacrament even as a mere performance, and to the doctrine of the *opus operatum*, which emanated from this source; while at the same time *preaching* and free pastoral influence, depending upon the education and sympathy of the individual, are wholly forced into the back-ground. Hence also, on the part of the individual, the disproportionate value assigned to works and the external agency of the Church, and the slight attention paid to dispositions and states of mind. Here also a reaction could not but ensue; and here in like manner it proceeded chiefly from the mystics. They conceived the worship itself far more in its ideal significance. In the Sacraments and other holy transactions, they insisted more decidedly upon faith and those inward conditions, on which all the salutary efficacy depends. They

again placed preaching in the foreground, vigorously and skilfully promoted the Christian education of the people, and trained them up in religion and morals, to a spontaneous zeal and activity. They pointed more decidedly from mere works to faith, love, and disposition, and, in short, did everything possible to make inward Christians out of mere outward ones. In all this they unmistakably cleared the way for the Reformers, as the restorers of internalism and subjectivity in Christianity.

Finally, and fourthly, the strictly objective tendency in the Church refuses to recognise the claim and importance of *nationality* in the religious life. It insists on strict and rigid uniformity even in externals. Hence arose the often violent attempts to force the Romish forms of worship and the use of Latin as the sole ecclesiastical language. It is true that even this may transiently have had a good effect in preserving the stability of the Church and civilizing the nations. Permanently, however, it was obstructive and even deadening. It is not the object of Christianity to destroy either individuality or nationality, but to refine both, and imbue them with a higher spirit. It *loves* liberty and wealth of intellect. A nationality may, perhaps, be bent, but, if sound, it cannot be broken. Hence, in due time, the nationalities of Europe rose up against the Church, which was attempting to make them all uniform, and insisted upon the right of being pious in their own peculiar and divinely appointed way, and of conversing with God in their own hereditary tongue. In this the Germans were foremost, and, as an unmixed race, exhibited the want in its purest and deepest form. Here also the Mystics took the lead, and paved the way for the Reformation; for, as we have seen in many instances, it was they who first preached and prayed in German, and taught devotion to supply its wants from German books.

If in these important respects Mysticism operated universally to secure to Christ within us, who is essentially spirit and life, internalism, individuality, and liberty, in short, to the subjective side of Christianity its due rights; it is at the same time not to be denied that, by virtue of its antagonism to the predominating objective powers, viz., the hierarchy, Scholasticism, and the form of worship, it became, in many of its modifications, narrow-mindedly

spiritual, and wilfully and even fancifully subjective. Here, then, it was the vocation of the Reformation to conjoin once more with the subjective side that which is objective, viz., the sure word of prophecy, the steady cultivation of doctrine, and a well ordered ecclesiastical and ceremonial fellowship. The same harmonious intermingling of the objective and subjective in the Christian body was manifestly also, although unavowedly, the aim of the Reformers; and albeit, owing to the unfavourable circumstances of the times and to human imperfection, it was not immediately attained, it is what we have still to regard as the task and vocation of the evangelical Church.

German Mysticism ran the same course as that of the Netherlands. Commencing with the pantheistical, the transcendental, and, in part, the fanatical, it refined itself into a doctrine of Christian theism and practical charity. Consistently, however, with the national diversities, the two processes of development manifest a difference, viz., that, in that of Holland, the middle links of poetry and speculation are not so prominently elaborated, as in that of Germany (Suso and the German theology); whereas, on the contrary, that of Holland has the advantage on the practical side (Thomas à Kempis). Each of the stages through which, in its purer theistical modification, mysticism passes, deposits, so to speak, something in the Reformation, and all of them are again reflected by it, not directly or in the same form as before, but renewed in youth, and mingled with fresh intellectual ingredients. The poetic vein of the mediæval mysticism we discover anew, in the fresh flight of the mind at the Reformation, and in Luther's spirit of Christian poetry, the sentimentalism, in the warm piety which characterises the faith of the Reformers, the speculation, in the profound spirit with which they everywhere embraced the substantial kernel of the objects of Christianity, and the practical character, in their simple, forcible, thoroughly moral, and national frame of mind.

With all this, however, the theology of the Reformers was not Mysticism. Mysticism operated essentially in forming their piety and theology; but their theology itself went far beyond it. Not to mention that the proper nature of the Reformers, especially

of Luther and Zwingli, was not contemplative, poetical, or speculative, but prophetically practical, their theology possessed above all an element of science and erudition, of which that of the mystics was wholly destitute. For this scientific refinement however, preparation was also made; and here we have to contemplate a man, who, reared in a mystical school, grew up with a freedom and solidity of scientific spirit, which well entitles him to be called pre-eminently the *theological forerunner* of the Reformation. We speak of JOHN WESSEL.

BOOK FOURTH.

JOHN WESSEL,

OR THE

REFORMATORY THEOLOGY PRIOR TO THE REFORMATION.

If I had read Wessel sooner, my adversaries would have presumed to say, that I had borrowed my whole doctrine from him. Our minds are so consonant to each other.—LUTHER.

PART FIRST.

THE LIFE OF JOHN WESSEL.

WESSEL'S IMPORTANCE. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the entire spiritual tendency and actings of the Reformers were not entirely novel, but had been in many ways prefigured and prepared, the same was also particularly the case with their *theology*. Setting out from the basis of Scripture doctrine, vividly and experimentally conceived and regenerated in freedom of mind, incited by mysticism without sharing its one-sidedness and subjective wilfulness, waging decided warfare with Scholasticism, but at the same time transplanting its scientific spirit into a higher sphere, and in this manner not merely evading, but effecting a real reconciliation of, the theological antagonisms of the middle age, this theology, by virtue of its historical position, has its root in the general civilization of the preceding age. Nor was it merely that single fragments of it existed beforehand. The fact is, we also find it pre-existing in fresh systematic combinations, not perhaps perfectly elaborated, but still in complete outline, so that it is easy to recognise all the features of the image which it was afterwards to bear. On this side, among all the pioneers of the Reformation, we unhesitatingly give the preference to *John Wessel*. His intellect and achievements, if we compare the 15th century in general to the dawn of morning, may be likened pre-eminently to those first luminous rays which, before the actual appearance

of the sun, break through the clouds and exhalations of the horizon. The mystics contributed warmth and spiritual life to the Reformation. Wessel, although he shows no lack of warmth, supplied it chiefly with light. Others, like Huss and Savonarola, may have been greater or mightier in action as Reformers, but he was their superior in reformatory thinking, research, and doctrine. In his case, accordingly, we have to occupy ourselves chiefly with theology. At the same time, since he was a man made out of one piece, his theology was based upon his life, and is expressed on all its sides; and thus even his life, as that of a Reformer, is of no inconsiderable importance.

A narrative of the life of Wessel is attended with a twofold difficulty. In the first place, many of the facts are uncertain; and, secondly, there is great confusion in the chronological dates. In the more ancient traditionary accounts of his acts and fortunes, truth and fiction are blended together, so that it is sometimes impracticable to separate the purely historical from the fabulous. There is much which strict examination proves to be untenable rumour, originating in the endeavour to glorify a man who needed no such external helps to be recognised as great; while other things appear to many doubtful and uncertain, though capable perhaps of being historically verified. The main incidents of his history, however, are sufficiently certain; And in his own writings we have the most sure of all sources of information respecting his spirit and endeavours. It is at any rate remarkable that, in the fifteenth century, when poetry had to a great degree disappeared from the domain of history, tradition should still have been so busy in embellishing the existence of a man who in reality lived the simple life of a scholar. This is a proof of the wide extent of his celebrity, even among the people. Unable adequately to comprehend his spirit, they endeavoured, as far as they could, by external marvels, to augment his fame.

Far more obstructive is the second difficulty in Wessel's history, presented by the obscurity and confusion of the dates. Here the biographer has, at his option, a twofold course of procedure. He must either take the trouble to expiscate, step by step, what the correct dates are, and interweave investigations respecting them with the narrative; or combine the received facts into considerable masses according to their inward

affinity. The first method interrupts the thread of the narrative, without affording any sufficient indemnification by the certainty of the results. I have, therefore, given the preference to the second, and shall arrange the particulars recorded respecting Wessel's life, chiefly according to their own inward agreement, without, however, on the whole, losing sight of the chronological order.[1]

It so happens that in Wessel's life three comprehensive epochs may very simply be distinguished;—first, his youth and education up to the time of his departure from the University of Cologne; secondly, his manhood, with the progress of his education and scientific labours during various journeys in foreign lands, especially at Paris, several cities of Italy, and Heidelberg; and thirdly, his tranquil but active sojourn in his native country, during the evening of his days, and till his decease. After the account of this the latest part of his life, in which we find him in a sphere wholly congenial with his mind, a general delineation of his qualities, actions, and peculiarities, as a man and scholar, will find the most convenient place. These together will form the first part. In the second, we shall delineate the theology of Wessel, commencing with its rudiments, and following it into all its more important ramifications, with a consecutive reference to the general theological proficiency of the age. And we shall reserve for the third, his connection with the Reformation, and all the literary matter which has either proceeded from or relates to him.

CHAPTER FIRST.

WESSEL'S YOUTH AND EARLY EDUCATION.

JOHN WESSEL was born in the year 1419 or 1420,[2] at Grönin-

[1] Occasionally, in the most necessary cases, brief chronological explanations will be given.

[2] According to other less probable accounts, about the year 1400. See chap. ii. p. 289 and Annot 1.

gen, in a house in the *Herrenstrasse*,[1] which is still standing, and may be recognised by the family coat-of-arms. His name was usually augmented by the addition of Herman, according to the custom of the age and place, which sought to designate the son more clearly, by superadding to his own the Christian name of the father. His father, accordingly, was called Herman Wessel. The name of Gansfort, or in its Dutch form, Goesevart, which Wessel also bore, was most probably not peculiar to himself, but common to the whole family, and derived from the village or estate of Gansfort, in the vicinity of Haren, in Westphalia, whence, as is conjectured, the race of the Wessels took their rise.[3] It was

[1] Hardenberg, the oldest circumstantial biographer of Wessel, and the author of the *Effigies et Vitae Profess. Groning.*, says: *in platea regia, e regione viae Carolinae.* A more exact account is given by Wessel's Dutch biographer, Muurling, in his *Comment. de vita Wesseli, p. 5. Domus, in qua primam lucem vidit, adhuc Groningae superest in platea dominica (Heerestraat) e regione viae Carolinae (Caroliweg)* et dignoscitur lapide quadrato, in quo insignia sive arma gentis Gansfortianae incisa sunt. He here also refers to the work of a scholar, who was a native of Grœningen, A. Ypey Leerrede ter gedachtenis van de verdiensten der Nederlandsche Vaderen betrekkelijk het werk der Kerkhervorming. p. 55. Groning. 1817. See besides Hofstede de Groot Geschiedn. der Broederenkerk te Groningen, 1832. p. 14. The coat of arms of the Wessel family, a goose, is on the gable of the house.

[2] Old-and New-Haren are localities in Westphalia, upon the left bank, and in the close vicinity, of the river Ems. They are only a few leagues distant from the province Drenthe to the northwest of Meppen.

[3] The simplest explanation of the matter, is that given by the author of the Effig. et Vit. Profess. Gron. p. 12: Gosvoerti autem sive Goeseforti aut Gansefortii cognomen, dialecto illud Westphalica, hoc Germanica anserum vadum sonans, suspicari liceat inde ei obvenisse, quod majores forte ex vicina Westphalia (ut multae aliae honestae hujus urbis familiae) hoc commigrassent, quum illud nomen villae non procul Harena hodieque maneat. This derivation is sanctioned by more recent Dutch authors. Muurling p. 104. It is likewise corroborated by the fact, that all of Wessel's family bore the surname of Gansfort and had a goose on their coats-of-arms. There are other modes of writing and explaining the word, viz., *Goezevoet*, or *Ganzevvet*, —Goosefoot, in allusion to a defect in Wessel's foot and gait, and *Gansevort*, *Ganzefoort*, because Wessel, as his enemies supposed, had only raised a loud gabbling against the Church, they had, it was said, called him Gansfortium sive Anserem valde clamosum. This explanation is manifestly in a high degree far fetched, and does not trace the matter to the root. It is no better than a jest of later origin, and only as such has any importance. It reminds us of the similar jests that were made upon the name of Huss, which equally signifies goose; and in

consequently no nick-name, but simply a family appellative, which, in the hands of adversaries, frequently became the subject of low jests. Among the learned, in compliance with a custom of the age, Wessel used also to be called Basilius, probably because Basil, according to the modern Greek pronunciation, very much resembles Wessel.[1] Several older writers inform us, that he obtained this name of honour in Greece itself, and from the celebrated Bessarion. But if there be a basis of fact in the case at all, this must rather have occurred in Italy, where, in the later period of his life, Bessarion had found a home.[2] In fine,

such company Wessel might well be pleased with them. Huss and Wessel were men who prepared the advent of the swan that with a still louder voice awoke the Church to freedom. Here, however, I must not omit to observe, that Mr Van Senden, formerly a preacher in the vicinity of Groeningen, and now in Zwoll, [Verfasser einer gründlichen Geschichte der Apologetik Grön. 1831. u. 41,] in answer to an application of mine respecting some of the localities, and especially Gansfort, totally denies the existence of such a place, and prefers the reading *Goesvoet* (Goosefoot the nickname taken from the halt in his walk.) He appeals chiefly to the authority of *Wiarda. Ostfries. gesch.* ii. 123, and *Oudheden en gestichten van Groeningen door* iv. *W. R. (van Ryn)* p. 107. Notwithstanding, it is possible that a place called Gansfort may formerly have existed, considering that older authors so distinctly refer to it, and even assign the situation. Perhaps it was but a small country house or estate, which has now disappeared without a trace. Fuller details respecting Wessel's different names are given by Muurling in a special appendix to his Comment de vit. Wess. p. 101—106, where also the whole literature upon the subject is quoted. His statements seem to me for the most part correct. The only particulars in which I cannot agree with him are, that Wessel was not originally called John, which however is the designation uniformly bestowed upon him, but that his proper name was Wessel, and that he received the appellation Magister contradictionum, as an honourable one from his friends. The name Wessel occurs both in Holland and North Germany as a family name to this day. In Stralsund during the first half of the sixteenth century, a highly respectable man, Francis Wessel, laboured with great zeal and energy to introduce the Reformation. See Fr. Wessel's, weiland Bürgermeister v. Stralsund, Schilderung des kath. Gottesdienstes—herausgeg v. Zober, Strals. 1837. Mohnike Joh. Frederus, Strals. 1840. s. 22, u. 56. Dröge Leben Fr. Wessels bei Sastrow iii. 316.

[1] So even in his day the author of the Effig. et. Vit. Profess. Groning. p. 12.

[2] Cum enim Bessarion teste Jovio jam anno 1434 in Italia vixerit, atque anno 1439 ab Eugenio Papa creatus sit Cardinalis, debuerit Wesselus ante annum xv. aetatis in Graeciam abiisse: quod a vero abhorret. Effig. et Vit. p. 12.

Wessel also bore two peculiar surnames—viz., The light of the world (*Lux mundi*), and the Master of contradiction (*Magister contradictionis*, or *contradictionum*). It scarcely deserves to be remarked, that the first was given him by the zeal of his admirers, like the splendid titles of old bestowed upon the most celebrated of the schoolmen. Whether or not the latter came from his adversaries, has in more recent times been disputed. The designation has been referred to the talent he possessed for sound and able contradiction, in other words, to his skill in controversy,[1] which certainly was far-famed. This derivation, however, appears to be contravened by a statement of one of Wessel's friends, from which it appears that he was called the Master of contradiction in a bad sense, and on account of his love of paradoxes, and his spirit of opposition to the prevailing opinions. The Dean of Naeldwick, Jacob Hoeck, at a late period of life, writes to Wessel,[2] "I can discover from your letter only one thing which, in my opinion, does not become a great man, viz., that you are of an obstinate disposition, and in all you deliver, aspire at a certain singularity, so that it is generally believed you were justly called the Master of contradiction. And do not doubt that even the peculiarities of so great a scholar as you are give offence to many." Let this suffice respecting the names of Wessel.

His *parents* were respectable citizens, the father, a baker by trade, the mother, descended from the honourable family of the Clantes.[3] He lost them both in early youth, and after their death, was, like Florentius before, and Luther afterwards, taken under the benevolent protection of a matron, Ottilia or Oda

[1] So *Muurling* in his Comment. de Vit. Wess. p. 23 and 105. Were this explanation correct, the plural Magister contradictionum would certainly not be used, but the singular Magister contradictionis, meaning Magister contradicendi, in contradicendo. That Wessel at first received the surname in a bad sense is also stated by Hardenberg: Coepit tamen a malevolis et invidis Magister Contradictionis vocari: quo nomine postea omnes Academiae eum vocabant. In fine, the epitaph of Wessel also serves as a proof; for in it the surname *Magister contradictionum* does not occur; while the one that was undoubtedly honourable, viz., *Lux mundi* does.

[2] Wesseli Opp. edit. Groning. p. 871.

[3] Mater aliqua cognatione attingebat familiam Clantorum. Hardenb. This family was also at a later period of great repute at Gröningen. Muurling, p. 6.

Clantes, a lady of good fortune, and distinguished by many feminine virtues, who educated him along with her only son. They received their first instruction at Gröningen, and, as this was not considered sufficient, afterwards at *Zwoll*, in the institution[1] of the *Clerks of the Common Lot*, which was then in high repute. Even in this first stage of his education, Wessel appears to have distinguished himself, from which fact we may infer the strength of his intellect more especially as he had to contend with bodily infirmities. He was troubled with weak eyes, and had the ankle bone of one of his feet distorted.[2] No doubt these circumstances contributed to give an introverted direction to his mind, and to confirm the strength and independence of his character in opposition to the world without. The instruction which Wessel received from the Brethren of the Common Lot was probably circumscribed within a very narrow circle, and limited to the learning of Latin, and a general introduction into the knowledge of Christianity from Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. His teachers developed within him the germs of a warm heartfelt piety, and trained him to apostolical simplicity and strictness of morals. In all probability, however, zeal for science was more roused than fully satisfied by the instruction which he here obtained. The further prosecution of the work, whose foundation was thus laid, and the acquisition of positive knowledge, belong to Wessel's own independent exertions, at a later period of life; and hence, in various particulars, he exhibits the peculiarities of a self-taught man.

It is impossible to discover who was Wessel's instructor in the rudiments of science[3] at Zwoll. The authors and founders of the Brotherhoods of the Common Lot were now dead. Respecting the man, however, who was chiefly instrumental in determining the inward bias of his mind, both by the positive influence which he exercised upon it and by the opposition which he called forth, we can scarcely cherish a doubt. It was *Thomas à Kempis*. Thomas was still living as a Canon on Mount St Agnes, about

[1] Nam Schola illic videbatur aliquanto cultior quam Groningae, maxime in aedibus Fratrum. Hardenberg.

[2] Oculis nonnihil luscitiosis et altero pedis talo nonnihil distorto. Hardenberg To the same effect Effig. et Vit. p. 13.

[3] As Hardenberg says, in rudimentis artium.

half a league distant from the town. Supposing that he himself was born about 1380, and Wessel about 1420, there was a difference of nearly 40 years in their respective ages; and if we further presume, that Wessel at the time was approximating to or had already reached 20, and accordingly, that Thomas was about 60 years old, we obtain such a relationship between them as to age, as would perfectly agree with the position in which they respectively stood towards each other, and which we are about to describe. As regards that position, we are not, indeed, to suppose that Thomas ever gave instruction, as a teacher, in the school of the brother house at Zwoll. This would not have been consistent with his peculiar duties, or that contemplative seclusion which was indispensable for him.[1] At the same time, it was natural that the more distinguished pupils in the seminary should be brought into connection with him, and we otherwise know that he was ever ready to help aspiring youths in their progress. It might have been confidently presumed that he would do so in the case of Wessel, even without express testimonies to the fact, but of such testimonies we are now in possession.[2] The oldest reporter,

[1] Comp. Muurling's Dissert. über Wessel s. 9. *Delprat* Beil. 6.s. 141—142.

[2] In the first edition of the work, I had presumed as highly probable, a close intimacy between Wessel and Thomas à Kempis, and an influence exerted by the latter upon the former during his residence at Zwoll. Now, however, I have positive testimony upon the subject, having in the meanwhile been permitted to see a manuscript in the library at Munich (Cod. Monac. 351. A. 163. Collectio Camerariana T. i.), which contains all the biographical notices and fragments respecting Wessel printed in the editions of Gröningen and Amsterdam. The manuscript may, in the passage before us—and this is even very probable as in others, also, it contains many *Hardenbergiana* — be the original of Albert Hardenberg himself. At any rate, it is a very ancient copy belonging to the first half or middle of the 16th century. By comparing the manuscript with the print, I have found that in the latter, several passages have been omitted (manifestly with intention), and among others, as is very striking, the very ones which touch the relation between Wessel and Thomas à Kempis. These passages likewise contain a highly remarkable testimony respecting the authorship of the Imitatio Christi by Thomas. At present I will direct the reader's attention only to what is immediately connected with our subject, and cite for his use the relative passages, as they are hitherto wholly unknown and unquoted. They are two in number. The one is contained in the promiscuous notices of Hardenberg respecting Wessel, immediately

Albert Hardenberg, founding upon accounts received from Wessel's cotemporaries, relates the following particulars: *Thomas*, whose fame was now attracting many youths, produced the same effect upon Wessel. It was just about the time when he had written his *book on the Imitation of Christ*, and *Wessel*, (who in this way must have been one of the first to read it,) averred that it had given him his first vigorous incitement to piety, and been to him the foundation of true theology. Whether it be, that it induced him to go to Zwoll, or that he was already there when he read the work, the effect was that he now zealously sought personal intercourse with Thomas, saw him from time to time,[1] became familiar with him,[2] and even entertained the resolution to devote himself to the monastic life in the same monastery. But an inward difference between

after the letter of Wilh. Sagarus and the particulars respecting him, fol. 12 of the manuscript, and is in these words: Monstrabant quoque illi viri (the monks of Mount St Agnes to Albert Hardenberg), scripta plurima piissimi viri domini Thomae Kempis, cujus praeter plurima alia etiam extat opus aureum de *Imitatione Christi; ex quo libro Wesselus fatebatur se primum gustum verae Theologiae percepisse*, eoque accensum, ut Zwollas admodum adolescens pergeret, ut rudimenta artium disceret simulque (ex intervallo) uteretur consuetudine piisimi patris Thomae, qui in Agnetano collegio Canonicus erat; quod Wesselus propterea reverenter colebat et nullo loco libentius, quam illic erat (then follows what has been printed). The other passage occurs in the Vita Wesseli, by Hardenberg, near the beginning, fol. 14 of the manuscript. After mentioning Wessel's settlement at Zwoll, quia Schola illic videbatur aliquanto cultior, quam Groningae, maxime in aedibus Fratrum, the manuscript proceeds: Et attrahebat multos ad se fama optimi viri, fratris *Thomae Kempis*, qui ex aedibus fratrum se in proximum Coenobium, Montem S. Agnetis occultaverat, ubi multos pios libellos scripsit. . . . Scribebat ea tempestate Thomas *librum de Imitatione Christi*, cujus initium est: qui sequitur me etc. Fatebatur autem *Wesselus, se prima incitamenta pietatis ex illo libro percepisse*, quo factum est, ut se insinuaret in intimiorem notitiam et *familiaritatem* domini *Thomae;* eo plane instituto, ut in eodem coenobio vitam monasticam amplecteretur. Sed cum super ea re saepius cum *Thoma* dissereret *Wesselus*, visus semper sibi est *quaedam nimium superstitiosa in illo coenobio animadvertere:* itaque cunctabundus omnia egit, deo haud dubie alio illum dirigente. And now comes what is also printed, although with some deviation, which we shall notice in the anecdotes about to be related.

[1] Ex intervallo, as Hardenberg observes.

[2] Hardenberg uses the expression, familiaritas.

the two also manifested itself, and had a counteracting effect. When conversing with Thomas about the choice of a vocation in life, it always seemed to Wessel as if there was too much superstition among the Brethren of the monastery of St Agnes. He therefore hesitated, as God seemed to have something else in view for him, and at last wholly abandoned his intention. In fact, Thomas and Wessel were naturally much too different in character to be able to walk wholly in the same course. Both of them were pious Christians, and in this respect, Thomas as the elder, might well exercise a powerful influence over the younger Wessel, in the way of exciting, kindling, and gently enlightening his mind. They likewise possessed in common a sincere zeal for knowledge. The relation, however, between piety and science, sentiment and life, was very dissimilar in their respective minds. In Thomas, piety and devotion greatly predominated. With an irresistible predilection, he plunged into the contemplation of divine things. Satisfied with scripture and a few good books, unconcerned with the changes of systems taking place on the arena of science, and with no wish to reform the ecclesiastical statutes, he was perfectly content when, under all the restraints which the church imposed, he was enabled to win the hearts of men to the love of God. In Wessel, on the contrary, the thirst of knowledge and the taste for action greatly preponderated, without impairing the piety of his heart. His desire was to master every thing the age offered as worthy of being known. He learned languages, changed systems, vigorously fought his way in the world, disputed, strove, contradicted the reigning opinions, and burned with desire to apply his hand to the improvement and reformation of the corrupt state of the church. In one word, *Thomas* was a God-loving, devout, and childlike soul; *Wessel* was a self-reliant, inquisitive, masculine, and reforming spirit.

This *reformatory spirit of Wessel*, which induced him subsequently to express himself in the characteristic words, "The true philosopher would fain remodel all kingdoms and nations, and bring them into a better and more prosperous condition, [1] if their rulers and princes would but lend an ear to his admonitions,"

[1] . . . in beatum statum *reformaret*. The passage is to be found in Scal. Medit. 1. 4, Opp. ed. Groning. p. 197.

was his main peculiarity, and showed itself even at this early period of his life. "From his boyhood he had always something singular and inwardly repugnant to all superstition."[1] This peculiarity of mind was also evinced in his connection with Thomas. It even appears to have developed itself more consciously in the mind of the youth, in contrast with one whom he so highly reverenced. Several very remarkable traits of it have been handed down.[2] Thomas, as we have seen,[3] was a great worshipper of Mary, and exhorted young Wessel to show the same special reverence for the Holy Virgin. On one occasion, when he was doing this, Wessel replied, "Father, why do you not rather lead me to Christ, who so graciously invites those who labour and are heavy laden to come unto him?" Thomas was no less zealous in fasting, as indeed he was in all parts of discipline; and as he was once inculcating it also upon Wessel and some of the other youths, he received from him the answer, "God grant that I may always live in purity and temperance, and fast from sin and vice!" Even here, in these first rudiments, Wessel's opposition manifests itself to be genuine and sound. It proceeds not from unbelief, but from a deeper, purer, and more enlarged faith; and consequently it is not merely negative, but likewise positive. This even Thomas knew how to appreciate, for he had himself helped to plant the spiritual germ in the soul of the youth. We have still more to say. "Thomas," as the reporter relates,[4] "on hearing this and similar remarks, was filled with wonder, and took occasion to change some passages in his writings, which now shew fewer traces of human superstition." It is easy to imagine that the liberal

[1] Omnino habebat Wesselus a *puero* semper *aliquid peculiare*, quod ab omni superstitione abhorreret.—Hardenberg in the Vita Wesseli at the beginning.

[2] Hardenberg in his Vita Wesseli. The printed edition does not here mention the name of Thomas, but merely speaks of a valde religiosus monachus. In the original manuscript, however, Thomas is named, and at the same time, the expressions are so perfectly suitable to his character, that I do not for a moment doubt the correctness of the statement.

[3] See supra, p. 126.

[4] Even this highly remarkable passage is found only in the manuscript. It runs thus: Talia multa cum ex ipso audiret *Thomas*, admiratus est; et sumpta occasione *quaedam in libris suis mutavit, quae nunc minus habent humanae superstitionis.*

and pious youth did exercise such an influence upon one, whose mind, although mature, had yet been narrowed by the cloister, and that in this way the more decided Protestantism, growing up under his eyes, had reacted upon Thomas himself. In this case, we should have to thank Wessel, that the book of the Imitation of Christ is purer from many ingredients of the Catholicism of the time than the other writings of Thomas; and even although this were ascribing too much to the reaction of the pupil upon his spiritual father, still the fact would remain, that Thomas appreciated and did justice to the youthful Wessel even when he was contradicted by him.

Besides, Wessel in his incipient opposition, resting as it did upon vital piety, was not narrow-minded and head-strong, but free and unprejudiced. He was satisfied with a thing which, although it might not in all respects correspond with his views, was yet substantially right. He complied with the customs of the Brethren of the Common Lot, in as far as his situation required, had his head shaved, and wore the customary dress of the scholars with a hood.[1] Respecting his life at Zwoll, we know the following particulars: The society of the Brethren in that place, after a season of great prosperity, during which *John Cele* († 1417) had laboured as master,[2] was, especially about the year 1415, and under the direction of *Dietrich von Herxen*, in a state of vigorous increase. Many laymen connected themselves with it; clergymen were appointed as under-teachers and monitors, among whom *John of Andernach* is specially mentioned; and the number of the Brethren and the scholars was so great, that they were obliged to occupy different houses.[3] Wessel, with about fifty scholars, lived in what was called the Littlehouse, which *Rutger von Doe-*

[1] Paulus Pelantinus, a friend and admirer of Wessel, says, in an Epicedium upon him:

Tunc ibat simplex nimium, tectusque cucullo,
Et circum corpus pendebat lutea vestis
Horrens, et totos texit velamine vultus.

[2] See respecting him Delprat s. 32 sq.

[3] See the recent notices respecting several of the Brother-houses, taken from the manuscripts in the Royal Library at Hague, by Delprat, in Kist u. Royaards Kirchenhist. Archiv. B. 6. s. 277 sq. At p. 285, we read as follows: Ao. D. 1415 fuit videre Suollis [sub Theodorico de Herxen] in domo clericorum aurea tempora, quin ibi ipsa florebat et decorabatur optimis fratribus. Odor sanctitatis per totam terram

tenghen admirably governed as procurator. His neighbour in the adjoining chamber, with whom he could converse through a hole in the wall, was a pious youth, called *John of Cologne*, who had previously been a skilful painter and goldsmith, but had now come to Zwoll to devote himself, under the guidance of Dietrich von Herxen, to the spiritual life.[1] Just as Thomas à Kempis in his youth had been encouraged in his piety by the example of his zealous co-mate, Arnold of Schoenhofen, so was now Wessel by John of Cologne. He instructed him in science, and received from him in return incitement to the fear and love of God.[2] There were at the time a number of able youths assembled at Zwoll;[3] and, not long after, it was visited by that *Henry of Alkmar*[4] to whom is ascribed the Dutch translation of *Reineke Fuchs*, a poem, whose humorous hostility to the clergy and various ecclesiastical institutions would assort well with the tendency of the liberal-minded among the Brethren of the Common Lot.

Even at this early period, Wessel instructed other young men besides John of Cologne. It was then customary at Zwoll to choose from among the scholars under-masters (submonitores

diffundebatur. Multi tum fuerunt viri seculares etiam et clerici *submonitores* scolarium. Inter alios Joh. de Andernaco, qui fuit positus ad regimen juvenum in domo vicina. See also Append. ad Chron. Montagnetanum c. 20.

[1] See the citations by Delprat in l. c. s. 295.

[2] Ibid s. 296 : Wesselus docuit Johannem scientiam, *Johannes* vero, cum esset totus fervens ad Deum, *docuit Wesselum timorem et amorem Dei.*

[3] Ibid. : Sic ergo tunc ornata erat *parva domus* (in which Wessel resided) juvenibus bonis, unde magnus fructus pervenit in scola Suollensi.

[4] Comp. respecting him the observations of Delprat in l. c. p. 291. It may have been the same Henry von Alkmar who was afterwards "scholemester uñ tuchtlerer des eddelen dogentliken vorst uñ Heren Hertoghen von Lotryngen". See Ebert bibliogr. Lexicon Nro. 18834, and Jac. Grimm in der Einl. zum Reinhart Fuchs, Berl. 1834 s. 175—177. So long as Henry resided with the Brethren at Zwoll, he was the Custos horologii et confessor sororum. Delprat in l. c. s. 295. In fact it would be curious to find, springing as it were from the same place, the Imitatio Christi and the Reineke Fuchs, two works which, infinitely different although they be, nevertheless agree in the circumstance, that their spirit is opposed to mere externalism and piety, only in the one case with deep earnestness, in the other with mirth and ridicule.

or lectores). Having early distinguished himself, Wessel was one of those selected for this office, and became *lector* to the third class.[1] It is true, that he is commended for not being elated by the distinction, but, on the contrary, complying, like the very humblest, with all the ordinances and discipline of the house, and even assisting the procurator in the services he had to perform.[2] At the same time, we also learn that, consonantly to his peculiar turn of mind, he even then, and perhaps when teaching his class, delivered opinions which deviated from the common, and thereby stirred up adversaries. This is said to have induced him to write a defence of his conduct, and take leave of Zwoll sooner than he would otherwise have done.[3]

These remarks indicate the main elements in the formation of Wessel's mind, in so far as they were connected with the circumstances of his early youth. We must not, however, omit to take into account the national character, which appears to have been impressed upon him with considerable force, although not with so much as was the case with Luther. *Wessel* was a *Frieslander*, and so belonged to a race, who have been always distinguished for energy, bluntness, independence, and love of freedom.[4] Their spirit of opposition, both ecclesiastical and political, was, in the middle ages, conspicuously evinced in the struggle of the Stedinger against the hierarchy and nobility.

[1] Even Hardenberg says in the life of Wessel: Coepit publice adolescentiam instituere, et sese exercere eadem opera. In the Epicedion of Paulus Pelantinus, Wessel is designated as in Swollis puerorum *exercitor* unus, while he was still at the Gymnasium, and ere his beard was grown. We now, however, also learn from the new contributions of Delprat in l. c. p. 295, more particularly: Wesselus, qui cum prius fuisset primarius vel secundarius [scholar of the 1st or 2nd class] Suollensis, propter ingenium suum et studium factus erat *lector tertiariorum*, et ita fuit in parva domo, sed habitu nostro cum juvenibus.

[2] Ibid s. 296. It is said that Wessel was sicut minimus eorum, and that he helped the procurator Rütger, cum de sero (of whey) pro juvenibus faceret collationem. (Collatio must here, of course, be translated meal. Rütger attended also to the food, s. 295).

[3] Bentham says in his Holländischen Kirchen-und Schulen-Staat P. ii. cap. iv. s. 178: "As they began to tease Wessel, so that he was forced to write an apology for himself, he quitted Zwoll." Compare Effig. et. Vit. p. 13.

[4] The Frieslanders were famed in the middle ages as a race of men distinguished for strength and size of body. In this respect they are

Until late in the 15th century, as we learn from a singular notice given by Æneas Sylvius,[1] the Frieslanders were unwilling to harbour unmarried priests among them, being solicitous for the chastity of their women, and believing that celibacy necessarily gave occasion to disorders. This independent spirit, hereditary in the race, we find transplanted into the ecclesiastical and scientific domain, by Wessel among others. His writings, indeed, show no traces of marked predilection for his country and countrymen;[2] but this is all the more demonstrated by the fact that, at the close of his life, he could find no dearer spot for repose, and the quiet exercise of his talents and affections, than his native land.

We have now first to note how Wessel left home to pursue his studies in a foreign country. He betook himself directly to the

mentioned by Dante, Infern. Canto xxxi. ver. 64. They are very characteristically described, especially as regards their love of freedom, by Aeneas Sylvius, in his work de Statu Europae sub Friderico III. *(Freher* Rer. Germ. Script. ii. 124.) Cap. xxvii. Frisia: Gens eadem ferox et armis excitata, robusti et proceri corporis, securi atque intrepidi animi, liberam se esse gloriatur: quamvis Philippus Burgundiae princeps ejus se terrae dominum vocat. Revera libera Phrisia est, suis utens moribus: exteris nec parere sustinet, neque dominari cupit, haud invitus Phriso pro libertate mortem appetit . . . . Sublimem virum, qui se caeteris efferat, non ferunt. John Saxo praises them for intellectual superiority, in his discourse upon the life of Rudolph Agricola, who was a native of Friesland: Nam Frisia, says he, ut olim magnitudine rerum gestarum floruit, ita nunc quoque gignit ingenia nequaquam vulgaria, sed cum ad literas, tum ad gubernationem magnarum rerum idonea, et ut mihi videtur non solum sagacia et sana, sed etiam ingenuitate et animi celsitudine singulari praedita. The statements of this Saxo (Saxe, Saxonius) acquire especial value, inasmuch as they are also to be considered as the opinions of Melancthon, for Melancthon has adopted the above-mentioned discourse among his Declamationes, and perhaps also furnished the materials for it. Comp. Edit. Argentor. t. i. p. 597.

[1] In the work quoted, de Statu Europae sub Friderico III. Cap. xxvii. It is a singular thing connected with this subject, that among the Reformatory views expressed by Wessel, there is not a single reference to celibacy, although lying so much in his way. He himself was all his life a bachelor.

[2] He mentions no doubt the Frisones, but only as an example, and in the most indifferent way. De Caus. Incarnat Cap. 16. p. 450.

University of *Cologne*. For this there may possibly have been a special inducement, in the existence of an establishment there for the benefit of students, called the Laurence bursary, and founded by a Doctor Laurentius, once a Professor of Theology, and a native of Groeningen. As having been born in the same town, Wessel might hope for an easy admission into this institution, which he in fact obtained without difficulty.[1] Perhaps, however, the more general attraction to Cologne, was the fame of its University, now, indeed, somewhat declined from its zenith, but still enjoying an extensive reputation.

In order to see how Cologne must have influenced Wessel, we cannot avoid entering upon the state of the University at the time, and, in connection with that, upon its earlier history.

During the mediaeval period, *Cologne*, if not the most considerable city of Germany, was still one of those which laid claim to that distinction. We find it a place of great magnitude and power even from the time of the Romans, involved in all the commotions of the races inhabiting the banks of the Rhine, and in the most important struggles of the German Empire, and the receptacle of all the good and all the evil which characterise the middle age. The Venice of Germany—to it converged every movement in art and science, trade and commerce, ecclesiastical and civil life, which, from the 12th century, took place upon the banks of the noble river.[2] It was the episcopal seat of the greatest of the ecclesiastical princes—of him who used to crown the Emperor, and almost always stood as councillor nearest to his throne. It was the main centre of that aspiring German citizenship, which manifested itself equally active in the trades of peace, and alert and victorious in war. It was one of the first commercial cities of the world, a powerful member of the Hanseatic league, a cradle for every art, especially architecture and painting, and a nursery for science, which here, for a season at least, accomplished the highest achievements of which Germany at the time could boast. In Cologne, the most subtile scholasticism met with the most devout mysti-

[1] Receptus est in Collegium, quod Bursam Laurentii vocant, eo quod a Magistro nostro, Doctore Theologo, Laurentio Groningensi fundatum sit. Erat is Pastor Groningae ad S. Martinum, sed cum ordinarius esset Professor Theologiae in Academia Coloniensi, plurimum illic residebat. *Hardenb.*

[2] See vol. i. p. 278—9.

cism, the strictest orthodoxy with the boldest heresy, the extreme bigotry and ecclesiastical legality of monachism with the most licentious antinomianism of fanatics and enemies of the church.[1] There was here the most stirring activity outwardly, and the most checkered mixture within, but still held together by the power of the national and civic spirit, and by the mighty hierarchy which ruled in the immediate vicinity.

So long as this fresh life was in its bloom, a university might well prosper in Cologne. With the general importance of the city, however, we see the literary institution decline, while education reared for itself other abodes. Respecting its rise, constitution, and fall, the essential particulars are as follows.

Before the foundation of the University, properly so called, there existed at Cologne an important *Theological School.* Even in his day, Innocent Third († 1216) speaks, in one of his letters, of persons who had here taken their master's degree, and in this place also Archbishop Sifried, in a diploma dated the year 1285, authorised the prosecution of theological studies. At this school the most comprehensive scholar of his age, *Albert the Great* († 1280), and shortly after him, the acute author of a new system of philosophic doctrine, *John Duns Scotus* († 1308), had taught, and even the great pattern of scholastic theologians, *Thomas Aquinas* himself, had received the chief part of his education. It had thus been the scene where the founder of one of the theological parties of the middle ages had terminated, and where the founder of another of them had commenced, his career. The importance of the theological seminary at this Episcopal see, has led many to antedate the institution of the University. This is incorrect, inasmuch as an important and well-frequented school, like that which existed in the place, even though devoted to a single faculty, might have been called a *studium generale*, or, according as it was understood in that age, a university, community, or corporation of professors and students. Formally, however, and according to the now customary use of the word, the University was instituted in the year 1388, when Urban VI., in a diploma issued from Perugia, invested the new aca-

[1] What Tacitus says of Rome may be applied to the Cologne of that age: Urbs, quo cuncta undique atrocia confluunt celebranturque. Annal. xv. 44.

demy with all the rights and privileges pertaining to the University of Paris.[1]

The consecration of the University took place upon the 22d of December 1388, at three o'clock in the afternoon, in presence of a numerous company of the clergy, magistrates, and chief inhabitants of the city, assembled in the chapter-house, where speeches were made, and the Papal bull of institution read. Several doctors from Paris, and, among these, some who were natives of Cologne, attended upon the occasion; from which circumstance the Cologne University was saluted as a daughter of that of Paris; just as, in turn, it became the mother of that erected at Louvain by Duke John IV., about the year 1425 or somewhat later, under the papacy of Martin V., and in like manner, of a similar institution at Treves, founded in 1450. The formal opening of the theological lectures likewise took place in the Chapter-house, upon the 17th of January 1389. The Rector was Theodore von Kerkering, a native of Munster, a Doctor in Theology, and previously a Professor at Prague; The first dean of the Theological faculty was John de Urbaria, Canon of the Cathedral. The four oldest burgomasters of the town were the standing wardens (*provisores*). The town-council and citizens did much to furnish and maintain the infant institution. They were not able, however, to meet the whole expense, and at their solicitation, Boniface IX. bestowed upon the University a prebend from each of the eleven religious houses then existing in the city. These eleven prebends were annexed to specific faculties and chairs, and were called *Praebendae primae gratiae.* They yielded, at different rates, from 1000 to 600 dollars. Subsequently, under Eugene IV., eleven others were added, and called *Praebendae secundae gratiae;* and, in course of time, further privileges and benefits were also conferred by the Popes. The University, as usual, was presided over by a Rector, and each of the faculties by a Dean. The right of representing the Rector devolved upon the Dean of theology, as the next in order of rank. The University had its own jurisdiction, which the Rector exercised. The Popes, desirous that the students should be looked upon as clergy, exempted them at first from the com-

[1] Compare *Bulaei* Hist. Universit. Paris. t. IV. p. 635—637.

mon civil courts. Criminal cases, however, at least afterwards, required to be brought before the temporal tribunal. The faculties of theology and philosophy were always strongest, and that of medicine the weakest, in number. The theological faculty numbered twenty-six doctors,[1] divided into *doctores de concilio* and *extra concilium*, and twenty licentiates; the philosophical, twelve doctors; the medical, six doctors and two licentiates; the juridical had also at first only six doctors, but afterwards many more. The theological faculty was besides furnished with large and splendid apartments, and other advantages, and likewise derived great weight from the circumstance of educating the whole clergy for the archbishopric.[2]

Connected with the University, there were several preparatory institutions in Bursaries or so-called Gymnasia. These were under the superintendence of the magistrate and the Deans of the several faculties, and were in general organically connected with the University, but especially with the faculty of arts. One of them was the Laurence-Bursary, founded in 1440 by Laurentius Berungen from Gröningen, a licentiate of theology and a Canon in the Cathedral; and it was this institution which *Wessel* entered on his arrival at Cologne.[3] The University, having grown from an enlargement of a previously existing philosophical and theological school, the faculties of theology and the arts acquired a decided preponderance over the two others. This was especially the case with the theological; for, as each faculty had not only a Dean but a Senate of its own, it was represented by a senate of at least twelve and probably more[4] members, whereas the

[1] Bulaeus in l. c. assigns only twelve members to the theological faculty. The way of explaining this difference is, that there were only twelve doctors *in* the council (the deliberative and governing faculty of the theologians), whereas the rest were *extra concilium*. Perhaps also at the first the number may have been smaller, and only in the sequel increased to twenty-six. The other explanation of the matter, however, is the more probable.

[2] See respecting all this Franz Jos. von Bianco Versuch einer Geschichte der ehemal. Universität und der Gymnasien der Stadt Köln, Köln 1833, drei Theile; zwei Theile Geschichte, dritter Theil Urkunden. Th. 1, s. 10—22.

[3] Comp. respecting this and the other gymnasia and bursaries, Bianco in l. c. s. 22—23.

[4] See supra Annot 1.

senates of the other two, particularly that of medicine, were far less numerous. Thus, by virtue of the very constitution of the University, *theology* reigned supreme at Cologne. For it the great majority of the professors were designed. Around these the far largest number of students assembled, and for a long long time Cologne was, next to Paris and Prague, the University of the continent most renowned for philosophy and theology, and frequented by almost all the men who, in the surrounding countries, rose to distinction in these branches. Owing, however, to the rigidly ecclesiastical and stationary character of the theology, the predominance of this faculty was of very doubtful utility. It operated as an obstruction and encumbrance to the advancement of general science. The University of Cologne remained far behind the rising demands of the age, and here, in opposition to the more liberal mystical (Tauler and others), to the bold pantheistical (Eckart), and to the heretical and polemical tendencies (the Beghards and the Brethren of the Free Spirit), the stiff, gloomy, intolerant spirit of scholastic dogmatism, whose fondness for persecution increased with the abatement of its life, fixed itself ever more and more firmly down. Immediately prior to the Reformation, we beheld this spirit displayed in all its grossness in the contest of Reuchlin with the Cologne professors. Cologne became the chief seat of the Inquisition in Germany. From it proceeded the persecution of the liberal-minded, and from it also, as we have already seen,[1] about the close of the fifteenth century, that notorious Directory for conducting and deciding trials for witchcraft, called the *Malleus maleficarum*, or Hammer of Witches. In this way, a city which had long been of importance for scientific education, became the seat *of obscurantism;* and hence we find the ablest men of the 15th and 16th centuries, especially such as had received a classical education, almost always speaking of Cologne with ridicule and contempt. For example, Celtes, who matriculated[2] as a student there in the year 1477, relates[3] that the philosophical course was limited to physics

[1] Vol. i. p. 341. Comp. Hauber Biblioth. magica 1738, tom. i.

[2] Compare Erhard Gesch. des Wiederaufbl. ii. 9, 10.

[3] Od. Lib. iii. od. 21, where among other things it is said :—

Nemo hic Latinam grammaticam docet,
Nec expolitis rhetoribus studet.

out of Albert and Thomas, that mathematics were wholly unknown, that there was none who could teach Latin correctly, or lecture soundly upon rhetoric and poetry, and that Virgil and Cicero were haughtily and contemptuously despised, like swine-flesh by Jews.

The University had already taken this fatal tendency when Wessel arrived at Cologne. It was, therefore, natural that a young man of powerful mind, who had learned fervent and simple Christian piety from experience, and been trained in a school which shortly afterwards sent forth the revivers of classical literature, should at once assume an attitude of opposition to the reigning spirit, and that the contradiction thus occasioned should have confirmed him in the reformatory path, upon which he had already partially entered, and which he ever afterwards more and more decidedly pursued. This was all the more likely to be the consequence, if it was true, that Doctor Laurentius, the founder of the

> Mathesis ignota est, figuris
> Quidque sacris numeris recludit.

And then further:—

> Ridentus illic docta poëmata,
> Maronianos et Ciceronios
> Libros verentur, tanquam Apella
> Carne timet stomacho suilla.

We must not, however, conceal, that a very eminent man of that age, Melancthon himself, speaks with no small commendation of Cologne. He says, in his *Responsio ad scriptum quorundam delectorum a Clero secundariae Coloniae Agripp.* in his *Declamat. t. i. p.* 587, *ed. Argentor.* of the University as follows: Nam ut de urbe et collegiis Ecclesiarum nihil dicam, certe Academias omnes propter doctrinarum varietatem veneror, et *Coloniensem* peculiariter colui, quod ingenii mei culturam, quantulacunque est, ipsi aliqua ex parte debeo. Audivi enim adolescens duos viros praeclare eruditos, Georg. Simler et Cunradum Helvetium, alumnos Academiae Coloniensis, quorum alter Latinos et Graecos Poëtas mihi primum interpretatus est, deduxit etiam ad Philosophiam puriorem; alter . . . primum nobis Heidelbergae elementa doctrinae de motibus coelestibus tradidit. Postea cum multis ejus Academiae alumnis foedera amicitiae sancta et perpetua fuerunt, cum Buschio, cum Petro Mosellano, cum Mezlero. Sed longum esset omnes enumerare. We must here make some allowance for gratitude, and the special object of the writer; but after all, the fact remains, that in Cologne, at the end of the 15th century, eminent men, and well instructed in philology and philosophy, were trained.

free establishment in which Wessel lived, was really so violent a defender of the hierarchy, that he used to boast of having, with his own hand, pushed the worthy Huss into the fire at Constance.[1] In that case, the gloomy and ferocious spirit of the Dominicans must have prevailed in the college, and by it Wessel, accustomed to something very different, could only have felt himself repugned. He did not fail to attend the lectures, and study all that came before him, especially in the branch of philosophy. But the more he had in his former training been directed to Scripture, the more lamentable must it have appeared to him, that all he now heard was extracted from Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and that a very moderate acquaintance with their systems was amply sufficient to obtain a master's degree[2] at Cologne. It was hence not much calculated to inflame his pride, that in this way he himself became a master.[3] After completing his philosophical course, he devoted himself particularly to theology, for which he had always a decided taste. But here his scholastic professors were as little able to satisfy him. He soon soared so high above the range of their prelections, that in the petulance of youth, he gave them no small trouble in the lectures by constantly starting some new point, of which it was beyond their power to give any proper solution.

He learned, however, from the dead, far more than from the living. At the beginning of the twelfth century († 1135) there lived in the monastery of the little town of *Deutz*, situate opposite to Cologne, a pious Abbot, by name *Rupert or Ruprecht*,[4]

[1] Solebat is inepte gloriari, quod sua manu Johannem Huss in ignem detrusisset. Hardenb.

[2] Wessel often complained, se nihil illic audivisse praeter Thomam Aquinatem et Albertum Magnum, quos si quis mediocriter discat, facile, inquit, fit Magister noster Coloniensis. Hardenberg.

[3] The statement of *Gerhard Geldenhauer* (comp. effig. et Vit. p. 14) that Wessel obtained a threefold degree of Doctor in theology, in law, and in medicine, is evidently fabulous.

[4] For information respecting Rupert von Deutz (Rupertus Tuitiensis), compare *Flacii Catalog. Test. verit.* p. 1420—26. ed. 1608. *Mabillon Annal. Ord. Benedict.* vi. 19. 42. 144. *Cave Hist.* liter. t. ii. p. 193 and 93. Histoire liter. de la France, t. xi. p. 422, and several writings which Muurling quotes, p. 19. Also various passages in *Schrœckh's Kirch. Gesch. Th.* 25, 27, 28. Rupert's works were published at Mayence in 2 folio vols. 1631.

eminent among his contemporaries for a lively piety derived from the Scriptures. This man had left behind him various writings on apologetical, liturgical, doctrinal, and exegetical subjects, which no longer possess any great importance for us, inasmuch as the pious sentiments which they express, are encumbered by a sportive, allegorizing, and dogmatical exposition of Scripture, but which, under the then existing circumstances, must have been of great consequence to Wessel, and on three accounts: First, There was in them a lively overflowing fountain of heartfelt piety, which refreshed him in the dry-parched land of Cologne scholasticism. Besides, Rupert was, in the main, an exegetical author, held the Bible in uncommonly high esteem, and, deviating from the usual course of the Schoolmen, referred all things, even in his doctrinal and ascetical writings, to its authority. Finally, there were thoughts in his writings which, for his age and the subsequent centuries, honourably distinguish him as a man of independent and liberal mind. More even than his contemporary, St Bernhard, Rupert of Deutz, is eloquent in praise of Scripture, declaring it to be the sole foundation of a steadfast faith and pure knowledge of Christ, and designating it as the great book of nations, which, in loud, clear and intelligible accents, proclaims to them their true salvation. In his earlier writings, (for afterwards he appears to have conformed more to the views of the church), he candidly expresses his opinion upon the doctrine of the Supper, maintains that even after consecration the substance of the bread and wine is not changed or done away, but that Christ, the eternal and unchangeable word of the Father, is, after a preternatural manner, united with it, and that it is only by true believers he is received in all his fulness,[1] just as in the union of the divine Logos with the man Jesus, the humanity was not destroyed or transmuted, but only assumed by the divinity. Add to this, that Rupert was penetrated with great practical zeal, and that he frequently inveighs against the

[1] A few of the excerpts, made by Wessel from the works of Abbot Rupert, have been preserved by Hardenberg, and among them is the following passage: In illum, in quo fides non est, praeter visibiles species panis et vini nihil de sacrificio pervenit; quemadmodum asinus ad lyram cum irrationales aures arrigit, sonum quidem audit, sed modum cantilenae non percipit.

moral corruption of his age, especially the profligacy of the clergy, and it will be easy to understand how Wessel should have felt himself powerfully attracted by his works, and found in them, more than any other, a rich fund of edification. He had only to deplore that, with his piety and excellent views, Rupert of Deutz belonged to so unfavourable an age. It was Wessel's general custom, diligently to improve the treasures of the monastic libraries at Cologne, especially that of the Benedictines,[1] and as the writings of the venerable Abbot were to be found at the monastery of Deutz, and doubtless also beautifully copied, he often crossed the river in order to peruse them. From these and other works which he read, he extracted what was most worth knowing, and putting it together, and at the same time appending thoughts and observations of his own, he formed a large collective work, under the title of *Mare Magnum*, which he afterwards carried about with him on his travels, and continued to extend, during the whole course of his life. After his decease these collectanea were for a length of time preserved in the convent of Mount St Agnes, near Zwoll, which was latterly his favourite sojourn, but they were afterwards destroyed or lost.[2]

At an early period of his life, Wessel also applied himself to the study of the ancient philosophers, and even conceived a

[1] In bibliothecis Benedictinorum reperit multa et exscripsit indefatigabili studio. *Hardenb.*

[2] *Hardenberg* gives the most precise information respecting this book of Collectanea. He says, Excerpserat multa ex libris Ruperti, quibus alia tum etiam addidit ex aliorum libris; postea et sua non pauca addiderat: postremo omnes suas cogitationes eruditas et sacras in illas rhapsodias congesserat, quae commentarii justi facti sunt demum, quas solebat ipse vocare *Mare Magnum*; quae utinam nobis non pe[illegible]nt. Dicebat mihi Gerardus a Cloester, sua aetate multa ex eo mari fu[illegible]in suo coenobio Agnetano; sed ea missa ad doctos quosdam in Brabant[illegible] aut Zelandiam, itaque nihil nunc ejus esse reliquum in coenobio. Mu[illegible] eorum, quae in libris de *causis incarnationis* et *magnitudine passionis* Domini habentur, ex illis commentariis esse desumta; licet ipsi post Wesseli mortem illa omnia ex abjectis follis, veluti ex Sibyllae foliis collegerint. The single disjointed sentences, the strings of propositions, which we meet in the works of Wessel, appear to have been much taken unelaborated from this common-place book. Haprenberg cites a few examples of the excerpts which it contains. It is greatly to be deplored that a collection, so interesting for the history of the theology of the period, should have perished. Compare also on this subject, Muurling's dissertation, p. 14, 19, 119.

strong partiality for the *Platonic*, above the Aristotelian *philosophy*. The latter, as we cannot doubt, by its connection with scholasticism, excited his aversion, while the former, by the animated shape it had assumed, and its affinity to Christianity, exercised over him a strong attraction.[1] In order to reach the fountains of the ancient philosophy, he required to be *acquainted with the Greek language*, and it fortunately happened, that the opportunity of learning it was offered to him by the sojourn of several expatriated Greeks[2] at Cologne. At least, he mastered it so far as to be able, in a measure, to see with his own eyes and help himself forward by his own exertions.[3] Whether he was at the same time instructed by monks[4] in the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic, must be considered doubtful. He had previously been taught Hebrew by educated Jews. A knowledge of the Chaldee and Arabic must, however, be reckoned among the exaggerations on the subject of his erudition; at least, not a single clear trace of it is to be discovered in his writings.

In this manner, Wessel was gifted by nature with admirable intellectual and moral qualities. As a native of Friesland, he possessed vigour and independence of mind. From the school of the Brethren of the Common Lot, he brought away fervent piety, scientific zeal, and a love of what is scriptural, plain, and practical. At Cologne, his aversion to scholasticism, then so much in vogue, his talent for controverting what was merely traditional in science and ecclesiastical life, perhaps, also, his fondness for Platonism, were developed. And as, at the same time, by the acquisition of the ancient languages, he began to open to himself an access to the fountains of science and religion in ancient times, we already discover in him the rudiments of all those accomplishments, by which he afterwards in manhood and old age rose to eminence.

[1] Such is the view of the matter given by the author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 14, and likewise by Muurling s. 15 and 16.

[2] Hardenberg describes them as Monachos Praedicatores.

[3] Dicebat tamen se nihil eximii ex illis potuisse percipere; sed tantum, inquit, ejus linguae didici, quod scioli quidam non potuerant me decipere in his, quae ad graeca biblia attinebant.

[4] According to Hardenberg, by *Monachis qui vixerant in transmarinis regionibus*, that is, who had before travelled to the east, and there acquired the Hebrew.

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE MANHOOD OF WESSEL.

After receiving this preparatory education, Wessel, in the years of ripe manhood, visited other important seats of learning, partly in search of still richer food for his aspiring mind, partly to confirm and enforce his convictions by conflicts with the learned, and, in fine, partly to contribute to their propagation by his labours as a professor. It would be difficult, in his case, to assign the distinct point, at which he ceased to be a student, and became a professor. In truth, he was publicly both at one and the same time. In that century, and during the whole of the middle ages, the class of students and professors was not generally so strictly separated as in modern times. Both of them were called scholars *(Scholares)*, *i.e.* persons of the school. Just as in ancient times, the season for learning during the mediaeval period, was extended much farther into life. Men, who had reached maturity, were seen travelling through the half of Europe, to the celebrated seats of science, and even the same individuals, alternating the parts of teacher and scholar, not merely at different places, but at one and the same place. The practice imparted a fine character to the universities of the age, gave a cast of freshness and youth to the office of professor, and conferred upon the class of students, in which were many persons of high accomplishments and reputation, a degree of dignity and weight, which finds expression, to a certain extent, even in the constitution of the universities. Add to this the constant itinerancy and change of situation, which we find common to almost all distinguished men, and which, far from being limited to the country of their mother tongue, extended over the whole of enlightened Europe. Scholastically confined, and ecclesiastically fettered in their creed, these professors and wandering scholars, like the knights of romance, enjoyed all the more freedom in life, and, in point of place at least, were wholly unrestrained. In this way, the one circumstance compensated for the other; and the

accustomed to figure to ourselves as under the strict discipline of the Church, were in no want of liberty and the excitement of constant movement. This itinerancy was, in one respect, a necessity, inasmuch as, before the invention of printing, the treasures of knowledge required to be sought in different localities, and the fame of a teacher was established, less by his writings than by his personal qualities. In another respect it was the source of very great intellectual advantages. It promoted education by a fresh and direct commerce with life, facilitated the general circulation of ideas in the absence of those multifarious appliances and means which we now possess, brought a constant accession of new elements to the universities, and raising distinguished men above the narrow bounds of their own particular country, stamped them as a common good for the whole civilized world.

All this we behold manifested in Wessel. As a travelling scholar, he moved from one to another of the most distinguished universities, learning, teaching, disputing, imparting incitement, and receiving it from others. We find him after leaving Cologne, at Heidelberg, Louvain, Paris, and several cities of Italy, especially Rome. It is indeed impossible to ascertain with accuracy the dates of all his learned peregrinations. But the following assignment of them, partly resting upon statements of his own, and partly requiring to be filled up by conjecture, may be considered as a close approximation to the truth.[1] Wessel, hav-

[1] One of the chief difficulties in determining the dates in Wessel's life, respects the year of his birth. We have two essentially different statements on the point. Hardenberg, in the life of Wessel, p. 1, says that he was born in 1400; Regner Praedinius, on the contrary, in 1420. The former is followed by H. F. v. H. (eusen) in Hist. Episc. Gron. p. 21., and his Dutch translator H. v. Ryn, and also by Alting, Geldenhauer, and the author of the inscription on Wessel's tomb in the church of Gröningen. The statement of the latter is adopted by Suffridus Petri (who, however, supposes the year to have been 1419), by most modern authors, and also by Muurling, in his dissertation upon Wessel. By far the most numerous and earliest authorities, and among these the register of the church in which he was buried, Hardenberg, and others, place his death in the year 1489, and only a very few, as, for instance, Flacius, Ubbo Emmius, and the author of the epitaph, somewhat later, in 1490. On this point we can scarcely hesitate to adopt the date of Regner Praedinius. He is an old and a very excellent witness, and expresses himself decidedly upon the point:—(Opp. Regn. Praedinii p. 198: Wesselus Groningensis—mortuus est uno et viginti annis ante quam ego nascerer,

ing already distinguished himself at Cologne, received a call, on very advantageous terms, to Heidelberg. This, however, he did not embrace,[1] but, as the conflict between the Nominalists and Realists had now broken out afresh, he felt himself far more powerfully attracted towards Paris, at that time the great theatre of literary life. In the first place, however, he went to Louvain, provided with favourable testimonials,[2] and probably with the view of preparing more thoroughly for his future career. Although he

nimirum octuagesimo nono supra millesimum et quadringentesimum, suae aetatis undeseptuagesimo), and besides, all the other dates in the life of Wessel consist best with that which he gives. Wessel lived from the year 1454 to 1473 in Paris, this residence, however, being interrupted in 1470 and 1471 by a journey into Italy. He then sojourned, in 1474 or 1475, in Basle, and in 1477 received a call to Heidelberg from the Elector Philip, which he followed. If we suppose that the year of his birth was 1400, many great improbabilities arise. How could Wessel have made his principal journies between the 54th and 75th year of his age? and who would have called an aged man of 77 to restore a faculty to a flourishing state? On the contrary, all things agree when we assign 1420 as the date of his birth. On that supposition, Wessel, having completed his early studies, took his principal journies, and executed his chief labours in the world, between the 33d or 34th and the 55th year of his life, was at 57, when still in the vigour of his powers, called to Heidelberg, and then, in his 59th year returned home, where he still spent ten years in greater retirement, but in active and successful labour, which would have been contrary to all expectation had he then been a man between 80 and 90 years of age. In this manner, all favours the statement of Regner Praedinius, and we unhesitatingly adopt the opinion, that Wessel was born in 1420, and died in 1489, in the 69th year of his age. Muurling Beil. 3. s. 106—108 has very accurately, and in substantial agreement with the foregoing remarks, treated of this point.

[1] He himself says in a letter of subsequent date to his friend Jacob Hoeck, p. 877 : Vocatus Heidelbergam, neglectis grandibus benficiorum pollicitationibus, quas per dictum Quapponem, pro tempore Confessorem Domini Archiepiscopi Coloniensis, Comes Palatinus offerebat, ea sola intentione et animo Parisios contendebam etc. It is possible, however, that Wessel at this period, or at least sometime before the year 1477, may have been in Heidelberg. Mention of a journey which he made from Cologne to that town in great depression of spirits (non modice moestus), but without assigning the time at which it took place, occurs in *Scala Medit.* i. 17, p. 216.

[2] Compositis itaque rebus suis (that is, as we most naturally suppose, at his native place) reversus est Coloniam, ubi aceptis literis testimonialibus de tempore et profectu studiorum suorum profectus est Lovanium. Hardenb.

found more to attract him in the theologians of this University,[1] and derived much greater satisfaction from their intercourse, than had been the case at Cologne, he notwithstanding soon left it for Paris. The date of his arrival here must be placed somewhere about 1452—54,[2] and consequently about the 32d or 33d year of his age. He tarried sixteen years or more, and visited several other cities of France, distinguished for the flourishing state of education. He then bent his course to Italy, and we find him, for certain, in 1470 and 1471 at Rome. Afterwards, having visited other seats of learning in Italy, he met, in the year 1473, with John Reuchlin at Paris, and with the same person at Basle in 1474 and 1475. It is probable that he then returned to his native country; but his stay in the Netherlands must have been of brief duration, for in 1477 he accepted a new call to Heidelberg. Here his influence was great; but his sojourn not of long continuance. For so shortly after as the year 1479, when the Inquisition prosecuted John of Wesalia, Wessel was once more at home; where he henceforward led a retired, but, in many respects, a very active life. This period of his manhood extends from about the year 1452 to 1478, or from the 32d to the 60th year of his life. The three places most distinguished as the scenes of his residence are *Paris*, *Rome*, and *Heidelberg*. We must direct our attention to these, one by one, and to their state at the time, in order to understand Wessel's labours in each; and we begin with Paris.

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[1] The University of Louvain, founded in the year 1425 or 1426 by Duke John of Brabant, and which accordingly was at this time somewhat young, developed in the sequel the same spirit in the department of theology as Cologne. For towards the end of the 15th and during the 16th century, we find the theologians of Louvain closely leagued with those of Cologne in hostility to the more enlightened men of their age. At this period, however, more scientific spirit seems to have been reigning in the former than in the latter University; for it is said of Wessel: Testabatur se paulo plus eruditionis (Lovanii) offendisse, quam Coloniae, et contulit saepe cum professoribus, et de qualibet materia indiscriminatim pertinaciter disputabat. *Hardenberg* and the author of *Effig. et Vit.* p. 16.

[2] At any rate, Wessel must have been for some time at Paris before the year 1455, for he there studied under John of Picardy, who died in that year.

An accurate account of the *University of Paris*, more especially in its scientific aspect, is no doubt here in the right place, not merely as being requisite in order to understand several facts in Wessel's life, but as tending to give us a clear and distinct view of the general state of the sciences, especially those of theology and philosophy.[1] Paris had long been, and still was, the scientific world in miniature, and the history of its university involves that of the entire course of the scholastic theology and philosophy from its origin to its close, at least of all its principal incidents.[2] With the *external constitution* of this mother of all the other

[1] Information respecting the *University of Paris*, its constitution and history, may be found, as is well known, in the following works: *Du Breul, Théatre des Antiquitez de Paris.* edit. 2. *Pars* 1639. 4. Liv. 2. *Bulaei Historia Universitatis Parisiensis.* vi. voll. fol. *Paris* 1665—1673. *Crevier Histoire de l'Université de Paris*, vii. voll. 12. *Paris* 1761. *Savigny Geschichte des röm. Rechts im Mittelalter.* 3ter *Band. Heidelb.* 1822. Among older works that of *Bulaeus* (Du Boulay) is still the best, on account of the extraordinary abundance of materials, although Crevier is superior in respect of composition. The passages of which we have chiefly made use in drawing up the following sketch, may be found tom. iv. p 885—895; tom. v. p. 851—865, 678, 882. seqq. *Savigny's* account of the circumstances of the University of Paris is classical, but it is confined to jurisprudence, which is just the branch for which Paris was least in repute.

[2] It must not, however, be supposed that it was either chiefly or exclusively *Frenchmen* who came forward in Paris as the celebrated promoters of scientific education and life. If we survey the most famous names of the mediaeval period, we find that, by their birth, Peter the Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventura, were *Italians;* Anselm of Canterbury, a *Piedmontese;* Hugh, St Victor, Albert the Great, and others, *Germans;* Scotus Erigena, Richard of St Victor, Alexander of Hales, and Duns Scotus *English* or *Scotchmen;* Raymond Lullus, and Raymond of Sabunde, and others, *Spaniards.* Among those who were properly *French* theologians, the principal to be mentioned are Roscellinus, William of Champeaux, Abelard, Bernhard, and Gerson. In however small a degree, therefore, the philosophy and theology of the middle age was either exclusively or principally the production of Frenchmen, Paris still claimed an extraordinary importance, as the oldest gathering-place of European learning, which it has continued to be in all following times. Just as the idea of sovereignty attaches to Rome, so did that of civilization and intellectual influence to Paris, and has continued to do so, even after Paris has ceased to be the centre of true European culture, especially in theology and philosophy. Since the 16th century, France and Germany have clearly exchanged parts. The latter has got the start of the former as the leader in science, as the former has of the latter, by a great way, in politics. Comp. vol. 1. p. 162.

universities of Europe we may presume the reader is acquainted especially after the admirable account of it by one of the greatest juridical investigators of the age. It was a freely congregated community of professors and students,[1] a literary corporation comprising a multitude of particular companies, and by its vital and highly complex organization, presenting the image of a true mediæval state. In two directions this body was divided into several circles. In a scientific respect, it split into four faculties, that of theology, of the canon law, of medicine, and of the liberal arts; and in a civil respect, into four nations, the French, the Picard, the Norman, and the English, which somewhat later, about the year 1430, passed into the German.[2] Every faculty had a Dean, every nation a President or Procurator, and at the head of the Corporation stood the Rector. These together represented and governed the University. Besides their connection with the whole, however, the smaller societies had again, in some measure, an independent life. Every faculty and nation possessed its own peculiar constitution and government, its particular statutes, localities, festivals, and holy things. Every nation was further divided into provinces, and each of these, governed by a Dean. The French and Picard nations had five provinces, the German in the fifteenth century three—the German, the Dutch, and the Islanders, that is to say, Englishmen.[3] The Norman nation was without a provincial sub-division. One would suppose that Wessel must have belonged to the German nation and the Netherland Province. He was, however, classed with the Picard, in which, according to a more ancient division, the Netherlands were reckoned.[4] In consequence of this also, we hear Wessel speaking of John of Picardy, as one of his chief instructors in Paris. Having already obtained the degree of Master of Arts, he was incorporated into that faculty.

[1] *Universitas Magistrorum et Scholarium*, not *Litterarum*, as Savigny has demonstrated in the clearest way, p. 380—382.

[2] Savigny, p. 325.

[3] Altorum, Bassorum, Insularium, Bulæi Hist. Univ. Paris. Tom. v. p. 864, 865.

[4] In this, however, strict attention was not always paid to the geographical division, for there are many cases of persons, belonging to a different nation from that to which they ought to have been assigned according to the land of their nativity.

We shall not enlarge at greater length on the externals of the University of Paris, its interior condition, in respect of *science* and *morals*, being of more consequence. As a whole, it was at the time in the bloom of its prosperity and repute. The Monarch and the people were both proud of it. It called itself the King's eldest daughter, and the most honourable men saluted it as "Our mother, the University of Paris." Its deputies had a place among the estates of the nation, and its advice was asked in all the most important civil and ecclesiastical affairs. *The Faculty of Theology* in Paris was of the highest consequence. It shed a lustre over the whole University. King Louis the Eleventh, in an address to the body,[1] dated 1473, expressed himself as follows: "But chiefly is the Faculty of theology extolled, which like a brilliant star has, by the splendour of its rays, kindled and illumined, not only our kingdom but the whole world, having constantly embraced the more profitable, and repudiated the less profitable doctrines."[2] The theological faculty had also the greatest number of Professors, containing, about the year 1473, as appears from the same edict, not fewer than twenty-one members, while that of canon law, which usually consisted of six Professors,[3] contained only three, and that of medicine five. Next to theology, the faculty of arts was the most flourishing, and in its bosom, the branch of philosophy.

In the study of the sciences in general, but especially of theology, as pursued in the University of Paris during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we may distinguish two grand epochs. These are determined by the influence of the Papacy. Irrespective of the fact, that the Pope had great authority with the University, in virtue of which, for example, in the year 1452, by the agency of a cardinal legate, without opposition on the part of the king, and with the assent of the institution

[1] Bulaei Hist. Univ. Par. Tom. v. p. 706.

[2] Gerson uses similar language in an address to the students of the College of Navarre in Paris. Opp. t. 1. pars. 1. p. 110. He says of the University: Aspicitur quippe tanquam coruscus quidam sol spiritualis Ecclesiasticam machinam irradians, errorum quoque tenebrosas caligines suo nitenti puroque fulgore dispergens.

[3] Bulaeus. Tom. v. p. 706. Savigny s. 338.

itself, he imposed upon it new statutes,[1] even the connection subsisting at the time of all the sciences with theology, of theology with the Church, and of the Church with the Papacy, naturally entailed an interference of the hierarchy with the studies not easily calculated. Accordingly, we select for our view of theological education in Paris, the two periods of the Papacy itself at this era, first the period of the Popes in Avignon 1305—1376, and next the period of the Papal schism from 1378 to 1417. The latter, however, extends farther into the fifteenth century.

During the interval that the Popes had their seat at Avignon, and were thereby wholly fettered to French interests, while at the same time the French Church was brought into still closer relationship with them, all France rushed to the study of theology and the canon law, and the other sciences fell into decline. A degree in these two faculties was the great object of desire, with which the fortunate possessor immediately hastened to Avignon, in order to commence the struggle for ecclesiastical dignities and emoluments. In this manner, the study of theology flourished externally, but was inwardly wholly subverted, and the most distinguished men of the period immediately subsequent, John Gerson and Nicolaus de Clamenge, bitterly complain of its low condition. Improvement in some particulars may have taken place; as, for instance, the first of the Avignon Popes, Clement Fifth, at the Council of Vienne, in 1311, passed an enactment, that, with a view to the conversion of the heathen, the Oriental tongues, particularly the Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee, should be taught at the university,—a circumstance which deserves remark in a life of Wessel, inasmuch as it involves the possibility of his having, at Paris, acquired, or at least perfected himself in, these languages, especially the Hebrew, with which he certainly was acquainted. But improvements of such a trivial nature were not to be weighed with the vast corruption in which the Church and its Head, and, along with both, the ecclesiastical sciences, were then sunk.

Matters, however, took quite a different position in the second period, during the Papal schism. In this interval, it is true,

[1] Savigny s. 346.

the Papacy suffered a still deeper humiliation. The Church was exposed to storms upon every side. But in the very midst of these, and as its saving power, theological science raised its head, and, with it, as its principal representative, the University of Paris. During the schism, the Church wanted a recognised supreme judicatory. The highest power was disrupted in itself, and a still higher tribunal required to be found, in order to settle the difference. Here science entered the breach. The universities, and especially Paris, afforded advice for the alleviation of the evils, and the governments, both spiritual and lay, respected their voice. That voice, however, again pointed to General Councils as the sole refuge, the true regenerative power of the Church. In this way, the principle of the decisive and legislative authority of such Councils, even in opposition to the Pope, entered the general conviction, and was reduced to practice. They who gave the advice were likewise mainly instrumental in carrying it into execution. At the great ecclesiastical assemblies which were thus convoked, talent, insight, and eloquence proved of much greater avail than ecclesiastical position; and thus it came to pass, that the chief representatives of theology at the time, such as Peter d'Ailly and Gerson, became the most influential directors of ecclesiastical affairs, and in and by them, science rose to a place in the history of the world. At the same period, the University of Paris stood, as political adviser, by the side of the kings of France. There was scarcely another body in existence possessing a grander vocation or sphere of action. It was, therefore, no wonder, that upon this noble arena of influential exertion, where the humblest might rise to the highest consequence, the energies of all were stimulated and evolved, and that, as the consequence, we behold Paris and France in the fifteenth century, especially during the first half of it, adorned with a train of admirable theologians, and at their head, a Peter d'Ailly, Nicolaus of Clamenge, and John Gerson.

Contemporaneously also with this general movement in advance, progress was made in particulars, and scientific ameliorations were effected, so that though the university outwardly underwent a gradual decrease by the erection of many new academies, its scientific spirit rose in proportion. The study of Greek litera-

ture, all but defunct, was revived afresh by emigrant Greeks and their scholars. A purer latinity and a higher style of eloquence were restored by a band of distinguished men, who took arms against the ancient barbarism, and in the bursaries or colleges, orders were given for rendering the cultivation of the Latin language and oratory more general.[1] There can be no doubt that Wessel participated in these studies. But his mind had already taken a decided bent to the real. He was too deeply absorbed with the substantial matters of philosophy and theology, to be capable of attaining a particular refinement and virtuosity in what is merely formal, and this with all his genius, we desiderate in his writings. At the same time, even theological life in Paris was now very exciting, chiefly in consequence of the conflict of reviving Nominalism with Realism, which we shall proceed to depict, after having first said a few words respecting the external course of theological study.

The *plan of theological study* pursued at the time was as follows:[2] The old prescribed term of five years for the academical course, had been extended by the theological faculty to six. This was also confirmed by the statutes, which the Papal Legate, Cardinal d' Estouteville, imposed upon the University in 1452. The subsequent path to the office of teacher, and the higher theological dignities, was as follows: Whoever wished to become a bachelor, required to shew the faculty, that he had studied six years, and that four of them had been employed upon the Bible, and two upon the Sentences or doctrinal divinity. He then, in presence of the faculty, went through his first course: that is, he was bound, during three months, publicly to answer questions (which was called *facere principium*), and then to give lectures upon some book of Scripture, in which the text was first read, and then glosses and comments appended. In this way, labouring through various books of Scripture, he required to proceed for two years before he was permitted to read the Sentences.

[1] Bulaeus T.v. p. 852—59. Hitherto grammarians and rhetoricians had separate schools, or houses and *hospitia*, in which they gave their instructions. Now, however, they began to teach within the walls of the colleges, and it became customary for both the students who were bursars and those who were not to frequent these lectures.

[2] Compare Bulaeus T. v. p. 863, 864.

During these two years he was styled *Biblicus*. After completing them, the faculty permitted him, upon his application, to lecture upon the Sentences, as a preliminary to which, however, he was obliged to deliver two discourses in Latin, and undergo an examination. If he acquitted himself to satisfaction, he was here also allowed *facere principium*. He then read in succession the different parts of the Sentences, and was required from time to time, while so doing, to give public trial lectures. During this interval, which lasted for a year, he was called Sententiarius. At its completion, he was a finished bachelor, *Baccalaureus formatus*, and could hope to become a licentiate, that is, obtain authority to teach in public. In order thereto, however, various exercises were required in the way of disputation, responding to questions, probationary conversations with the faculty, and preaching, of which, at the time, every learned theologian was expected to be capable, as he was generally in priest's orders. Only after these preliminaries, did the candidate obtain the right or license to teach publicly; on which occasion the chancellor also presented to him, with solemnity, the doctor's bonnet.[1] We thus see that the licentiates and doctors of those times were thoroughly schooled, and subjected to long and hard labour, for to complete the entire course of academical study, from its commencement to its highest stage, an interval of not less than ten years was required; and as it was the custom of the period to go later in life to the University, very few youths ever reached a professor's chair. That Wessel should have undergone all these formalities, is scarcely credible; for we shall find in the sequel, that the want of a doctor's degree in theology proved an impediment to him. His spirit was not of the kind, to ascribe much value to such things. And, moreover, he had an idea of the relative importance of the several branches of theological science quite different from that which forms the basis of the course of studies above described. In it the

[1] "The promotions in *all* the faculties were made with the approbation of the Chancellor of the Cathedral, in the faculty of philosophy, however, also with that of the Chancellor of St Genevieve, so that there was a liberty of choice betwixt them. In more ancient times this competition, as it seems, was available for all the faculties." *Savigny*, p. 336; where the method of promotion in the faculty of canon law, its conditions, and expenses, are also treated.

scholastic doctrines appear as the higher and more worthy object, to which the student must ascend from scriptural theology. Even then, however, Wessel recognized the superiority of the study of Scripture to that of the Sentences. The same circumstance makes it uncertain whether he ever taught publicly at Paris. There is no doubt that he had students under his tuition; but his influence over them appears to have been exercised more in the way of private intercourse.

It is remarkable, that with his predominant scriptural tendency, Wessel should have taken so lively an interest in the *contests of the Realists and Nominalists*, now renewed afresh, and even actively mingled in them. The excitement kindled in the University of Paris, doubtless stimulated his mind, and as nothing interested him so much as the struggle for truth, he could from that motive engage in the conflict, uninfluenced by ambition or the love of wrangling. We must here also give a view of the previous course of the dispute, in order to explain his position.

The antithesis between *Realism* and *Nominalism*,[1] which runs through the whole theology and philosophy of the middle ages, has its extreme roots in the philosophical systems of antiquity, especially in the antagonistic modes of thinking of Plato and Aristotle. It is likewise to be found, although as yet undeveloped, in primitive Christian theology from its commencement. It was only at the close of the 11th century, when the scholastic theology took its rise, and by means of the contest between Anselm and Roscellin, that it became so far evolved as to be a subject of distinct consciousness, and have the effect of forming parties. Taken in the most general point of view, the dispute related to the question whether so-called universals possess objective reality, or have merely ideal existence in our thinking?

1 On this subject compare, besides the works of Brucker, Tiedemann, Cramer, Tennemann and Ritter, especially Joh. Salaberti philosophia Nominalium vindicata. Par. 1651. &c. Meiners de Nominalium ac Realium initiis ac progressu. Comment. Societ. Gott. T. xii. Cl. hist. et philos. T.W.V. Cousin Introd. to Abelard's Works i. 60. Baumgarten Crusius de vero Realium et Nominal. discrimine, Jen. 1821, and in the opusc. Theol. p. 55 sqq.

This question had been proposed in the *Isagoge* of Porphyry,[1] the dialectical guide in universal use during the middle ages; but remained unanswered. The time, however, was now come for deciding it. By universals two things could be meant, either the five general ideas of the Aristotelian logic,[2] which were likewise called predicables *(praedicabilia)*, or generic ideas. This circumstance introduced a difficulty into the conflict. In the sequel of it, however, universals were usually understood to mean generic ideas; and respecting these, Realism taught that they had an objective existence even apart from our thought, whereas Nominalism asserted that they were merely abstractions of human thinking, verbal signs, names, nay, as Roscellin is said to have expressed it, a breath of the mouth.[3] For example, the Nominalist required to say: That which we call mankind does not exist as such, but only in this or that person. It is merely an idea abstracted from the generality of the individuals—a form of thought in which these are all comprehended. The Realist, on the other hand, maintained that mankind is also something actual, either the prototype of humanity preceding all individual men, and divinely creative of them, or that which, whether in or with the things themselves, lies as their proper and formative substance at the foundation, when they are severally made.

At first the contest possessed merely a metaphysical interest. But in course of time, by the application of the philosophical conclusions to which it led to particular doctrines, such as those respecting the person of Christ, the nature of man, the Trinity, and the Godhead in general, and by the divisions of schools and parties which arose in consquence, and grew into full force by the jealousy of the two most influential monastic orders, it also acquired great ecclesiastical importance. The application of the antithesis to theology we shall endeavour to shew in two instances. In the doctrine of the Trinity, Deity or Being was

[1] Porphyr. Isag. edit. Bip. p. 370. The expression of Augustine, de Doctr. Christ. i. 2. was specially urged. Quod nulla *res* est, omnino nihil est.

[2] Τένος, εἶδος, διαφορά, ἴδιον, συμβεβηκός.

[3] Flatus vocis.

the generic idea, but Father, Son, and Spirit, the concretes, or individuals, which participate in that generality. To ascribe independent reality to the generic idea of Deity, and thereby make the essence of the Trinity consist more in what is common to the three, than in the separate subjects, might lead to the conclusion that there is no real distinction of the persons, and that these have their true reality only in the Godhead generally, and not each one for himself. This was the consequence of Realism, and it approximated closely to Sabellianism or to the older Monarchism. If, however, no reality be ascribed to the generic idea of Deity, if it be considered as a mere mode of thought, then the substantial bond between Father, Son, and Spirit, is done away, and the conclusion may be drawn, that the Godhead has no positive existence in itself, and only exists in the three persons. Such was the consequence of Nominalism, viz., a relapse into Tritheism. Both consequences were objected, this by the one party and that by the other, to their respective opponents. Again, in the doctrine of the Divine attributes, these attributes were the universal, and God the individual to whom the universal was ascribed; and when the Realists represented this universal, or, in other words, the Divine attributes, as things of independent existence, their adversaries objected to them that they were separating God from his attributes. If, on the other hand, the Nominalists urged that it was not right to speak of the justice or goodness of God, because justice and goodness do not exist of themselves, but that we ought only to speak of a just God and a good God, they were accused by the Realists of separating God from God and lapsing into Polytheism.

It was not, however, the simple antithesis as we have now depicted it, which divided the theologians and philosophers of the middle ages. This formed only as it were the starting point. But as happens in all controversies, which are continued for any length of time, so here also various modifications were attempted, so that at the period when Wessel lived there were four different systems upon the subject, at the option of the enquirer, viz., a twofold form of Realism and a twofold form of Nominalism. If generic ideas have a real and objective existence, they must have their being either independent of actual things, and prior to them as their creative prototypes (*universalia ante rem*, the Platonic or older Realism of Anselm), or they have it merely with

and in the things, as that which is common to them all (*universalia in re*, the Realism of Aristotle, and subsequently of Scotus, and which is also styled Formalism, in respect that ideas are conceived as the original forms, *formæ nativæ*, of things). If, however, ideas have no objective existence, but only exist in our thought, they must then be either pure abstractions of the understanding, and verbal signs (which is the Nominalism of the older Roscellinus and of the later Occam), or they are indeed abstract notions, but still likewise realities, being founded in the constitution of the mind, so that they have at least an ideal reality (*species existentes*, the later Nominalism of Thomas). The confusion of language, which finds its way into every long-continued dispute, made its appearance here also, so that it is often difficult to find the precise terms for designating the several theories.

A main cause of the confusion was the suppression of Nominalism by violence. This had taken place even in the person of its first representative, Roscellinus, who was condemned in 1092. After that no one was willing to be any longer a Nominalist. First of all, from Anselm's days, Platonic Realism bore the sway, but it passed into the Aristotelian, when Aristotelianism gained the ascendancy. By degrees, however, in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries, we find distinguished theologians and philosophers occupying a position which at an earlier period would have been called Nominalistic, but which now pretended to be Realistic. Of this description was the mediatory theory of Thomas, a sort of ideal Realism, but which was fundamentally Nominalistic. It is true that Scotus took his stand, once more, decidedly upon the (Aristotelian) Realistic side. His disciple, however, *William Occam* (†1347), a man of independent mind, and who won for himself the title of the "venerable innovator" or "founder,"[1] had once more the courage to be an open and undisguised Nominalist. He taught the doctrine[2] "that a universal is not anything real or possessing existence of itself, either in or out of the soul; it has only an imaginary existence in the soul." To this purely Nominalistic theory, although with partial

[1] Venerabilis Inceptor.

[2] Sentent. 1. distinct. 2. See particulars respecting the Nominalism of Occam, Rettberg: Occam und Luther, in the theol. Stud. und Krit. 1839. 1. s. 81. sq.

modifications,[1] the most distinguished theologians, at the end of the 14th and in the course of the 15th century, such as Peter d'Ailly, John Gerson, J. Buridanus, Marsilius von Inghen, and others, attached themselves. The cause thereby acquired a new importance. Nominalism now became the fresh and active element in science. It gained adherents from the ranks of scholasticism to the Reformation, and in this respect it is here of special importance to us.

The *reformatory* element in *Nominalism* lay less in its particular doctrines, than in its general spirit;[2] and here we have specially to consider the following points. From its origin, Nominalism was obliged to fight its way under an overwhelming pressure, and was scarcely able to save its existence. Hence, with the sense of long-continued oppression, it combined the utmost inward elasticity against it, and from the moment of its revival disclosed a spirit of opposition, which communicated itself to the whole party. This was the case all the more, that in the person of the "venerable Innovator," the Spirit had found a singularly powerful representative. Occam was a decided adversary of the abuses in the Church and University, inwardly displeased with the hierarchy and tradition, and celebrated as an antipapal confederate of Louis the Bavarian, to whom, when they joined hands for the common struggle, he addressed the memorable words, "Defend me with the sword, and I will defend you with the pen." It is true that Occam did not openly take the field against the doctrine of the Church. On the contrary, he frequently avers his perfect subjection to it. This averment, however, recurs so often, that it is impossible not to suspect it of something intentional; and it is at the same time combined with the irony of the sceptic, who, no doubt, allows the received doctrine to retain its absolute authority, but at the same time endeavours, that its unreasonableness and absurdity may not

[1] So Gerson, who acknowledged an amount of truth in the Formalist system. De Theol. speculat. Consid. 9. p. 370. *Baumgarten-Crusius* Opusc. p. 73.

[2] Comp. H. Ritter über den Begriff und Verlauf der christl. Philosophie. Theol. Stud. und Krit. 1833, Heft. 2, s. 300 sq. And now also his Geschichte der christl. Philosophie.

be wholly unseen in its consequences.[1] A certain measure of this spirit of the founder spread over the whole party. In the nature of Occam, however, there was seated, besides the sentiment of self-reliance and independence, a prevailing endeavour after the utmost possible stringency in thinking, and precision in the definition of ideas and terms (*termini*), in consequence of which these modern Nominalists were also denominated Terminists.[2] This tendency spontaneously bred, along with the irony to which we have alluded, a critical and sceptical tone of mind[3]—a direction which Scholasticism in general, since the time of Scotus, had begun to assume, but which now developed itself with all the greater power, inasmuch as it was the wish of the Nominalists to purify the whole Scholastic tradition, and reduce it to its genuine substance. Add to this, that, as mysticism represented the subjective, and, in a certain sense, the experimental principle, in opposition to collective Scholasticism, so, within Scholasticism itself, did Nominalism do the same in opposition to Realism; and we have stated enough to enable the reader to understand how Nominalism, advancing side by side with mysticism, and partially also, as in the case of Gerson, blending with it, could furnish an important element for the dissolution of Scholasticism, and the process of reformation. It was the spirit of innovation, of independence, of logical strictness, of criticism, doubt, and subjectivity, by which, irrespective of particular assertions, it acquired this importance, and united in fellowship all the minds which combated antiquity and were striving for progress. It is true that the necessity for a reformation was generally felt by every candid and honest man, independently of the opinions and tendency of the schools, and hence we find zealous reformatory characters even in the ranks of the Realist party, such as Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague. But in general, the reformatory tendency in the 15th century goes hand in hand with Nominalism, and even the Reformers, in so far as they took part in the philosophy of the schools, were attached to that party.

[1] See Rettberg in l. c. §. 77—80.

[2] Comp. *Baumg.-Crusius* Opusc. p. 71, and the quotations there given.

[3] See *Baumg.-Crusius* Opusc. p. 71 and 72.

Before, however, the *Nominalists*, who were pretty generally designated as innovators,[1] in opposition to the Realists, who bore the name of veterans, could achieve the intellectual conquest which they celebrated in the 15th century, they had severe struggles to maintain, especially at Paris. To the Realists, who found themselves in quiet possession, Nominalism was a disturbing element. It seemed to threaten the Church with a one-sided, critical, and negative tendency, and even the State with dispeace. From this point of view the Civil government of France was led to undertake, what in former periods the Church had successfully accomplished, namely, its entire suppression. Various attempts of the kind took place as early as the years 1339, 1340, and again in 1425, 1465,[2] and 1473. Of these I select the last for an example, partly as being one of the most striking, but more because Wessel was then living at Paris, and is said to have been concerned in it. We shall relate the facts. On the 1st day of March in the year 1473, the haughty, hypocritical, and bigoted monarch Louis XI. issued an edict,[3] addressed to the University of Paris, and which he designed as a stroke of lightning for the annihilation of Nominalism. In this missive, the high lustre and beneficial effects of the University, especially of the theological faculty, are first extolled. It then asserts that this prosperity has been mainly promoted by the sound and excellent principles of the Realist professors, both in the faculty of arts and among the theologians, and intimates that for this reason their doctrine would be taught in future. But it farther declares, that of late several professors, such as William Occam, Buridanus, Peter d'Ailly, Marsilius, Adam Dorp, Albert of Saxony,[4] and others, had arisen, broaching a new doctrine, which

[1] Louis XI. in his edict of 1473, calls them doctores renovatores.

[2] In this year the Theses of a Nominalist, *M. John Faber*, excited so much notice and alarm, that, by the unanimous decree of the whole faculties, they were transmitted for thorough examination to the faculty of arts. *Bulæus Tom.* v. *p.* 678.

[3] Bulæus Tom. v. p. 706.

[4] The three first named persons, viz., Occam, Buridanus, and Peter d'Ailly, are sufficiently well known. Marsilius von Inghen, also, who was among the more eminent theologians at the University of Paris during the fourteenth century, has acquired an extensive celebrity,

many students of the University having ventured to embrace, were thence styled Nominalists or Terminists. "Wherefore," pursues the King, after adverting to his prerogative of Defender of the *true Catholic faith*, "we ordain and enjoin that the above-named doctrine of Aristotle and his commentator Averroes, of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Ægidius of Rome, Alexander of Hales, Scotus, Bonaventura, and other Realist teachers, whose principles have in former times been proved to be sound and safe, shall henceforth, in the usual way, be propounded and professed, exhibited for belief, learned, and embraced, at the University of Paris, both in the faculties of Theology and the Arts. Whereas our will is, that the opposite doctrine of the Nominalists whom we have named, and of others like them, whosoever they may be, shall not be propounded, taught, or maintained either in this city or any other part of our kingdom, whether publicly or privately, or in any way or manner whatsoever." It was farther enjoined that all the members of the university should take an oath in the presence of the Rector to obtemper this edict; While contraveners of it were threatened not only with the royal displeasure, but also with banishment from the country for life, nay, in certain cases, with excommunication, and such other penalties as might seem fit. In fine, it was ordained that all Nominalist writings should be delivered up upon oath, and placed under the strictest surveillance. This edict had the effect which has often attended manifestoes on the subject of faith and science; it promoted the cause which it was designed to crush. To appearance its severe orders were strictly obeyed. The oath was taken, as required, upon the ninth of March, at a general meeting of the university in the convent of the Bernhardines, by the Rector, the students of Canon law and medicine, and the procurators

from the circumstance of his afterwards being the first to hold the place of Rector at the newly-instituted University of Heidelberg, where he died in 1394. I have nowhere else met with any mention of Adam Dorp, who was probably of the same family as Martin Dorp, the more celebrated friend of Erasmus. Albert of Saxony earned for himself a name at Paris, by his philosophical lectures, between the years 1350—1361. He was several times procurator of the nation of Insulars, and in 1353 filled the office of Rector with much applause. Compare Bulæus Tom. iv. p. 948 and 949.

of the different nations, quite unconditionally, and by part of the theologians under certain conditions. Every library delivered up *one* Nominalist work. The books were bound with a chain, and the whole affair seemed to be finally settled and at rest. No later, however, than upon the 14th of the same month a second general assembly met in the Church of St Julien, and resolved to annex certain restrictions to the oath, and send a deputation to ask the monarch for an abatement or modification of the edict. In the meanwhile, the Nominalists kept themselves somewhat quiet. Several respected individuals, Master Berengarius, Mercatoris, and Martinus Magistri, the latter, a doctor of the Sorbonne and royal almoner, exercised an influence in their favour upon the mind of the bigoted monarch; and the result was, that on the last day of April 1481, there appeared a short missive from Mr. d' Estouteville, Provost of Paris,[1] as commissioner of the king, to the effect, that the Nominalist books, should be freely given back, and be accessible for use, and that Dr. Berengarius would orally state the reasons which had induced the king to take this step. It was then intimated to all the members of the University, that henceforward it would be lawful without danger or scruple of conscience, to profess the doctrines of the Nominalists as well as of the Realists. A vote of thanks to the King, the Provost, and Master Berengarius, was thereupon passed. The Nominalists congratulated each other upon the recovery of their liberty, and the result of the whole was a recommendation of their opinions.[2]

In these proceedings some have chosen to assign a leading part to Wessel, and that upon the side of the oppressors.[3] They tell us that John *Bochard*, or *Boucart*,[4] doctor in divinity, and by birth a Norman, who had previously been confessor to Charles VII., and afterwards became Bishop of Avranche († 1484), was the chief counsellor of Louis XI. in this attempt to suppress opinion, and that he employed Wessel in carrying his plans into

[1] On the relation of the Provost of Paris (præpositus Parisiensis) to the University, see Savigny, p. 317, 329.

[2] Bulæus T. v. p. 739—741.

[3] See Bulæus T. v. p. 918. Bayle Diction. t. iv. p. 2867. Not. B. edit. 3.

[4] Compare Bulæus T. v. p. 886.

execution.[1] Now, it is true that Wessel was at the first a keen opponent of Nominalism, and went to Paris for the express purpose of combating it. But whoever knows anything of his character, will find it impossible to believe that such weapons as were used could ever have been approved of by one who decidedly resisted all human authority in matters of faith, and was the foremost friend to the investigation of truth, and a free and fraternal interchange of ideas. Besides, while on the one hand, the accounts which represent Wessel as a confederate of Boucart are of doubtful and impure origin; on the other, the most credible witness, even Wessel himself, speaks so impartially respecting his connection with Nominalism at Paris, that it is impossible to consider the story as anything but a fiction invented to blacken the character of one who for other causes was disliked.[2]

The fact is, that at the time he left Cologne, where, as the bequest of Scotus, Realism appears to have reigned, Wessel was zealously attached to that system,[3] and had come, as he himself

[1] There can be little doubt that there is here some connection with what two French historians, De Thou and Mezeray, relate concerning the important services which Wessel performed to the University of Paris. The former, in his Hist. Franc. Lib. xxii. fol. 677, designates Wessel the restorer of the University, under Louis the Eleventh. The other entitles him incidentally Rector. Hist. de Franc, tom. ii. p. 123. Compare Muurling s. 34. and 5th Beylage s. 112—114, where there is more information of the same sort. All these accounts, however, appear to rest upon exaggeration and imperfect acquaintance with the facts.

[2] The story is also chronologically untenable. Wessel undoubtedly went to Paris some time during the fifth decennium of the fifteenth century. He was then a zealous Realist, but before the lapse of three months, he had become a Formalist, and within a year a decided Nominalist. This is his own testimony, Opp. p. 877. He adhered to Nominalist opinions to the last. The edict against the Nominalists appeared in 1473. How then could Wessel have acted in so self-contradictory a manner?

[3] *Muurling* says, s. 25: Quid causae fuerit nescio, sed secutus erat huc usque Wesselus partes Realistarum. The matter, however, appears tolerably plain. Realism was during Wessel's youth still dominant in most universities, besides Paris; and more especially may we suppose it to have been the traditionary doctrine at Cologne. Consequently Wessel had never studied under any but Realist professors. So likewise Hardenberg and the author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 16: Reales, quos plerosque audiverat.

relates, to Paris in order "as a fresh and quite distinguished champion," to encounter two of his own countrymen, Henry Zomeren and Nicolaus of Utrecht, who were at that time celebrated professors,[1] confident that he would confound them, and effect their conversion from the side of the Formalists to Realism. "This was unquestionably," he says,[2] "high presumption on my part. But having learned, in the encounter with abler men, to feel my own weakness, before the lapse of three months, I renounced my opinions. Nor was it long before I had diligently collected the authors who have written upon the works of Scotus, Maro, and Bonetus, which I had learned to know as the best of that school. Feeling however, still dissatisfied, and having, after very close attention, discovered in the system of Scotus still greater errors than in that of the Realists, and being always willing to receive instruction, I once more changed my opinions, within a year from the time I had embraced them, and joined the party of the Nominalists. But I will candidly confess that, were I persuaded of their doctrine being in any point contrary to the faith, I would even now be ready to recede, and once more join either the Formalists or the Realists." In this manner Wessel had made a transition, through the intermediate Formalism of Scotus, from proper, *i.e.* Platonic Realism to strict Nominalism; and for this we can very easily account. His mind was too lively and inquisitive to continue immoveable in any theory which he had once embraced. Nominalism was the new reanimating element, the fresh fermenting material in science; and this was enough of itself to attract him. But, besides, the men of that party were more liberal-minded and enlightened, thought more acutely, and expressed themselves more precisely, than their opponents,[3] which could scarcely fail to conciliate in their favour his taste for science. And so far from being a man likely to side with a party because it happened to be dominant, or sanction the adoption of violent measures in science; the

[1] Qui praecipui tunc regnabant in secta Formalium. Hardenb.—Effig. et vit. p. 16.

[2] In the letter to Hoeck on the subject of indulgences, Wessel. Opp. p. 877.

[3] Nominales, quos reperit aliquanto puriores aut saltem subtiliores. *Hardenb.*—Effig. et Vit. p. 17.

bent of his mind to resist all compulsion would, on the contrary, rather have impelled him to Nominalism, had he observed any attempt to extirpate it by force. Even his fondness for paradoxes might influence his determination in favour of that school, for, since the days of Occam, it had been distinguished for a similar taste. With whatever warmth Wessel embraced an opinion, he never failed to maintain that impartial frame of mind which becomes a lover and searcher of truth, and by virtue of which he was prepared at any moment to make the sacrifice, not indeed of anything essential to true religion and morality, for, on such points, we find him always continuing inflexible and like himself, but of anything which pertained merely to theory, if it appeared to his mind untenable or less correct than something else. In the passage above quoted, he expresses this readiness with reference to Nominalism; further investigation, however, conducted him to no different results. He continued faithful to it[1] in all his later writings, uniformly designates himself one of its adherents, recognizes the Nominalists as pre-eminently the teachers of truth,[2] ascribes to them greater conclusiveness and stricter connection of thought,[3] and expresses a mean opinion of the Realists, as if it were impossible for their school to produce a really distinguished man.[4]

It would be very interesting to know more of Wessel's *instructors* at Paris. But the information which can be given respecting them is very slender. There is no doubt that the two Formalists above-mentioned, *Henry of Zomeren* and *Nicolaus of Utrecht*, must be ranked in the number, inasmuch as they were the means of recalling him from the path of Realism. Besides, he himself incidentally mentions *William de Phalis*, *John of Brussels* and *John of Picardy* as having been his teachers. They all belonged to the Picard nation; but so far as my knowledge extends, no particular account can be given of any of them but two,

[1] Quoniam tutiorem viam non invenirct, nec quae magis ad simplicitatem scripturae et veterum Patrum accederet, permansit in illa Nominalium secta. Hardenb.—Effig. et Vit. p. 17.

[2] Wess. Opp. p. 876.

[3] Nosti, schola nostra *Nominalis* talem verborum dissidentiam et discohaerentiam non admittit. Wessel. Opp. p. 890.

[4] Wessel. Opp. p. 867.

viz., Henry of Zomeren and John of Picardy.[1] The former, in 1460, went from Paris, as canon and professor, to Louvain, where he embroiled himself with Peter de Rivo, a professor of philosophy, in a metaphysical dispute concerning future contingencies *(de futuris contingentibus)*, which in 1472 the Pope decided in his favour.[2] John of Picardy, whose family name was Haveron, was rector of the University of Paris in 1430, and died in 1455. Solemn funeral obsequies were adjudged to him by all the nations; and the faculty of Arts, over which he had presided for many years, passed a resolution appointing an annual divine service for the peace of his soul. He appears, accordingly, to have been a much respected man, and Wessel, in speaking of his instructors, mentions him with peculiar distinction.

But even more deserving of notice than these are several young men, upon whom, while at Paris, he exercised a stimulating influence, and who may therefore, in a certain respect, be called his *disciples*. During the early part of his sojourn, he seems to have been chiefly occupied in acquiring knowledge; latterly, however, and especially after his return from Italy, he imparted it to others. Among the young men who enjoyed the benefit of his intercourse in this way, two are prominent, *John Reuchlin* and *Rudolph Agricola*, who afterwards rose to high celebrity. The former arrived at Paris in the year 1473, as companion of the young Margrave Frederick to Baden,[3] and being a lively and aspiring youth, scarcely 18 years of age, took the warmest interest, even then, in all the phenomena of scien-

[1] A few notices respecting both of these persons may be found in *Bulaeus*, respecting the former in *Tom.* v. p. 882, and respecting the latter in *Tom* v. p. 889. The author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 16, also relates of Henry of Zomeren, that he was a native of Brabant, dean of Antwerp, and on very intimate terms with Cardinal Bessarion. It is likely that it was he who first introduced Wessel to Bessarion's acquaintance.

[2] The Pope who gave the decision, Sixtus IV. (raised to the dignity in 1471), had himself written a book upon the same subject. Muratori Rer. Italicar. Script. Tom. iii. Pars ii. p. 1056 C. Very probably, also, Sixtus IV. at the time he was living as Francis de Rovere at Paris, had been personally acquainted with Zomeren. Respecting Henry of Zomeren, see a passage in John of Goch, de Libert. Christ. i. 26.

[3] Compare the particular account given by *Mayerhoff* in the *Leben Reuchlins* s. 5—11, where, however, there is some inaccurracy in

tific life.[1] He received from Wessel his introduction to the study of philosophy and the ancient tongues, guidance to the original and genuine fountains of the Aristotelian doctrine, and possibly also instruction in that language whose revival in the Christian world afterwards secured to him so high a reputation. This, however, is uncertain—it may even be said, unlikely.[2] *Agricola*[3] was *Wessel's* countryman, and had probably formed his acquaintance in their common native land. He often saw him afterwards, during his long residence at Paris (from about 1463 to 1476), and cemented a warm and familiar friendship with him. He was twelve years older than Reuchlin, and having tarried longer at the French capital, had the opportunity of experiencing more amply the influences of Wessel's mind. In his case, according to his own averment, we can have no doubt that Wessel incited him, especially to the study of Hebrew.[4] In a knowledge of classical literature and its languages, Agricola

what he relates of Wessel; also Erhard in the *Geschichte des Wieder Aufbluehens Wissensch. Bildung* B. 2. s. 150. The older accounts of Reuchlin's life are well known. They are cited by Erhard s. 147 and 148.

[1] See Reuchlin's letter to Jac. Faber, Epistolar. L. ii. p. 155 und to the Faculty of Paris p. 160; also de Verbo mirif. Tubing. 1514 fol. 2.

[2] According to Melancthon's report in his *Orat. de Joh. Capn. Declam.* t. iii. Reuchlin learned from Wessel the elements of Hebrew. This, however, is at variance with Reuchlin's own statement, that *Jehiel Loans*, a learned and respected Jew, with whom he became acquainted at a much later period of life, had been his first instructor in that language. He says *Rudimenta Hebr.* p. 3 : Is me supra quam dici queat, fideliter literas hebraicas primus edocuit. *Mayerhoff* s. 29, supposes that after having acquired by himself the grammatical rudiments, Reuchlin was first thoroughly grounded by Loans; a conjuncture which would not quite exclude his having received some amount of instruction from Wessel. It is very possible, however, that Melancthon's statement to that effect, has no better foundation than untenable tradition, and this opinion seems to be confirmed by an averment of Agricola's, which we shall quote in the next note but one.

[3] We shall say more of him in the sequel. Erhard gives a sketch of his life, B. i. s. 374—416. Muruling s. 53, draws an able parallel between Wessel and Agricola.

[4] Agricola himself says this in a letter to Reuchlin *de studio Hebraicarum literarum. Basilius* quoque noster, quem deterruisse te scribis, acriter me incitavit, sequutus tamen fortasse impetum meum, et calcaria, ut dicitur, currenti subdens. Est autem Basilius, de quo

was probably even then greatly superior to Wessel, although a much younger man; for he afterwards incomparably outstripped him as a philologist. Indeed, Wessel never seems to have attained to very distinguished proficiency in the ancient languages. There can be no doubt, however, that he exercised a material influence upon the religious opinions of these two eminent youths. Of the fact we have positive evidence, at least in the case of Agricola. Neither of them, however, prosecuted the study of theology, farther than the connection which then subsisted between it and philology necessarily required; whereas theology was the element in which Wessel exclusively moved.

Besides the individuals whom we have thus pourtrayed, some of them older than Wessel, and also his instructors, and others of them his juniors, and in a certain respect, his scholars, there were several distinguished men of high office in the Church, and then resident in Paris, with whom he stood in friendly connection. The most eminent of these were Cardinal *Bessarion*, and *Francis de Rovere*, the General of the Minorites, but who subsequently rose to the Papal dignity as Sixtus IV. Henry of Zomeren, Wessel's master, was intimate with Bessarion, and also well acquainted, as we may conjecture from several circumstances, with Francis de Rovere. Bessarion and Rovere, were warmly attached to each other. In this way, these persons constituted a friendly circle, into which Wessel was first introduced by Henry of Zomeren. Taking all into view we cannot question that, at Paris, he moved in noble, worthy, and animating society. We have dwelt, however, sufficiently long on his outward circumstances, and it is now full time to look into his mind, and mark his progress in theology.

Wessel's peculiar *religious convictions*, we can have no doubt, were even at this period of his life permanently fixed. The radical disposition of mind, which had been formed within him

scribis, in patria: fuit mihi cum eo arctissima familiaritas. From this passage the whole relation between Wessel and Agricola shines forth with tolerable clearness. Wessel was not properly Agricola's teacher, but rather the promoter of his studies. The words, *quem deterruisse te scribis*, intimate that Wessel had neither instructed Reuchlin in Hebrew, nor even so much as encouraged him. Respecting the letter of Agricola from which the above passage is taken, see Oudinus de Scriptor. Eccles. t. iii. p. 2712.

in youth, and chiefly under the influence of the Brethren of the Common Lot, remained unaltered. He changed its scientific form, but retained the substance. The indestructible basis of his religious and theological life involved, as its two constituent elements, a profound attachment to vital, plain, and Scriptural Christianity, and a great originality and freedom in his scientific views, resting upon the Christian spirit and nobly independent of human authority, traditionary maxims, and antiquated superstitions. His freedom of mind was rooted in the firm soil of genuine piety, and his piety manifested its vitality by never shrinking from the unrestrained development of science and of thought.[1] From this noble frame of mind grew up the several convictions of Wessel, which we shall fully unfold in the sequel, but will here merely indicate in a brief sketch.[2] He clave with his whole soul to Scripture. He looked upon and dealt with it, as the true, vital, and only reliable fountain of Christian faith; while, on the contrary, he impugned the obligation of the traditionary articles of the creed, and doubted the absolute authority of the Church, and of the Church's head, the Pope. He was willing to believe along with the Church, but not to believe in the Church, and to go with the Pope, but only so far as the Pope went with the Scriptures. In the Scriptures, however, Wessel did not seek dead articles of faith for the understanding, but a living Christ for the whole of his inner man. To Christ, as a Redeemer, he clung with entire affection and absolute trust; and, on this very account, decidedly rejected every thing else on which it is possible for man to lean, all personal worthiness in the sight of God, and all desert accruing from good works and ecclesiastical penances. He was decidedly opposed, not only to indulgences, but to every description of righteousness by works, and in combating them, naturally attacked, at the same time, the Church's doctrine of Purgatory; for Purgatory was to him nothing else but the purifying virtue of yearning after God, which, with-

[1] Respecting Wessel's theological tendency in general, see *Maurling* Oratio de Wesseli Gansfortii, Germani theologi, principiis atque virtutibus. Amstelod. 1840.

[2] A short and excellent summary of the leading principles and doctrines of Wessel may be found in *Seckendorf* comment. de Luth. Lib. i. sect. 54, cap. 133, p. 227. One less correct and complete in the Effig. et vit. p. 121.

out Ecclesiastical mediation, leads man from the heart outwards to the Divine being. In respect of doctrine, he referred back to Scripture, and in respect of the constitution of the Church, to the primitive circumstances of the Christian community, as these may be best known. In the one case, tradition, in the other, the hierarchy seemed to him something falsely interposed between Christ and the Church. On the other hand, the idea of a general priesthood of Christians, resting upon the immediate connection of the redeemed with God, floated distinctly before his mind. In virtue of that, he thought that even the humblest Christian, if he be a genuine priest, and rooted in the Gospel, may instruct the Pope, while the Pope on every hand finds the limits of his power, the moment he oversteps the precincts of the Gospel.

Even in *science*, *Wessel* retained the same sentiments. He would permit no received forms of the School to fetter his mind. At Cologne and Paris, the more authorities were urged, the more deeply did he imbibe a sense of his independence of them, and of his own power and gifts; and when the chief spirits of the immediately preceding age were cited in opposition to him, it only served to make him more conscious that he had a spirit of his own. Just as, according to the beautiful story, the sight of a picture by Raphael first inspired Corregio with the perfect certainty that he too was a painter, so on these occasions did Wessel say,[1] "Thomas was a doctor, what then? I am a doctor, too. Thomas hardly knew Latin, and it was the only language he did know; whereas I am master of the three principal tongues. Thomas scarcely beheld Aristotle's shadow, but I have seen him in Greek and among Greeks."[2]

[1] The anecdote belongs originally to *Geldenhauer's* account of Wessel's life: Quare si quis forte inter disputandum, ut fieri solet, ei obiiceret: hoc dicit Doctor sanctus, hoc Seraphicus etc. ipse respondere solebat: Thomas fuit Doctor, quid tum postea? Et ego Doctor sum etc. Geldenhauer assigns no date, but the author of the *Effig. et Vit.* *p.* 14, fixes his abode at Cologne as the time when the sentiment was expressed, though without sufficient grounds. It was probably a saying which Wessel had often on his lips. Brucker and Muurling, s. 110, wholly reject the anecdote, on account of the vain-glory which it expresses. I see in it only a strong feeling of self-reliance, to which Wessel might be easily induced to give utterance by the incessant appeals made to the Schoolmen.

[2] In ipsa Graecia vidi. Respecting Wessel's supposed journey to Greece, see the sequel.

Wessel's Protestantism manifested itself early, and with special vigour, in his hostility to that doctrine which was also the proximate source of the Reformation by Luther, the doctrine of *Indulgences.* While in Paris, he had continual opportunities of discussing and debating the subject both with friends and foes. Convinced, like Luther, of the nothingness of human merit in the sight of a holy God, from whom alone all good comes, he was necessarily led to repudiate the insufficient, and, to a certain extent, pernicious means of salvation, which the Church of the age, deeply imbued with Pelagianism, freely offered. The traffic with indulgences, therefore, could not but be an abomination to him. He expressed his sentiments respecting it, not merely in friendly circles, but, when opportunity offered, before men of all descriptions. "It is not from any endeavour after singularity," as he writes in a letter of later date to Jacob Hoeck,[1] "but because incited and compelled, as appears to me, by zeal for truth, neither is it for the first time, that I now maintain, but often in Paris,[2] thirty-three years ago, and in presence of the learned, I used to maintain, that from my earliest childhood, it has always seemed to me ludicrous and unworthy to believe, that any man (viz., the Pope) can, by his sentence, cause that which is of small value in God's sight to acquire a higher degree of worth through the mere accession or interposition of a human judgment."

Before leaving Paris with Wessel, we have to take a look at

[1] *Wess. opp. p.* 876. With this we have to connect the passage p. 886. Ante annos XXXIV. Parisiis, dicaciter magis, quam sagaciter, utinam non temere, inter doctissimos quosque crebro sententiam hanc effudi, quam tibi nunc effundo. The whole letter is directed against the views commonly entertained of the Papal indulgences.

[2] That even so early as during his residence at Paris, Wessel had evinced a decidedly reformatory tendency, and in this respect been of some consequence to the University, is acknowledged, in a remarkable way, in a letter dated 1st Dec. 1557, and addressed by his countryman, the Protestant Theologian Adrian van Haemstede, to Henry II. King of France, in which it is said: Neque enim negari potest multos abusus, alios errore, alios quaestus causa receptos esse, quorum emendationem etiam superioribus seculis flagitarunt docti et boni viri, *in illo ipso doctissimorum virorum coetu Lutetiae*, quae est praecipuum domicilium doctrinarum toto orbe terrarum, Gulielmus Parisiensis, Johannes Gerson, *Wesselus* et alii, eosque abusus fatemur a nobis taxari et tolli, ut ostendunt nostrae confessiones. See Adriaan van Haemstede door J. ab *Utrecht Dresselhuis*—in Kist en Royaards Archief. D. vi. p. 122.

the moral condition of the University.[1] As life in that age was generally of a rude character, and as there were few restraints upon the liberties of the students, frequent outbreaks of immorality and untamed strength naturally occurred at the Universities. Accordingly, the opinion delivered by Wessel respecting the spirit, which reigned in these seats of learning, especially at Cologne and Paris, is by no means favourable. He looked in vain for good morals, and still more vainly for Christian piety, as an element of life, and expresses himself upon the subject, in his own way of looking at everything from a Scriptural point of view.[2] "It is," he says, "a great and heavy complaint against universities that Paul did little good at Athens, and found a far more favourable opening in the adjacent city of Corinth, and in Thessaly, then almost in a state of barbarism, than in Attica, where the fountain of Greek wisdom flowed. The study of the sciences, accordingly, when it is merely superficial, and not animated by a higher spirit, is not in itself particularly acceptable to God. In fact, what I saw when living at Cologne and Paris, was doubtless rather odious to Him, I mean, not the study of the sacred sciences, but the moral depravity with which it was mixed up."[3] Wessel applies to the universities what is said in Scripture about the Scribes and Pharisees resisting Jesus, whereas many of the publicans and sinners obeyed his call. "The Scribes," he says, "daily occupied themselves with God's word, and yet acted contrary to it, in consequence of which their minds were hardened, and, so to speak, encrusted with horn, and they became so depraved that they were more

[1] Comp. Meiner's Hist. Vergleichung der Sitten des Mittelalters iii. 463.

[2] Censura Wesseli de studiis Universitatum in his work, De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 788 and 789.

[3] Grievous complaints of the corruption of morals at the university of Paris are also made by a person fully acquainted with the circumstances, viz. Gerson, in his epistle to the students of the College of Navarre Opp. Tom. i. Pars i. p. 110—113. He finds a main cause of the depravity in the number of tutors, who did not exercise sufficient strictness towards the youth committed to their charge, and even sometimes set them an example of bad conduct. He further complains particularly of the party spirit and divisions. On the licentious conduct of the students at that time, see Crevier Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris iii. 220 sq.

wicked and obdurate than the publicans and sinners, being worse to convert, and fiercer in their opposition to sound doctrine, whereby their ultimate amendment became ever more and more desperate. . . . For," he proceeds, with an allusion to the Greek fire, "as that is a strong fire which continues burning even under water, so must that be a stiff-necked depravity which endures and remains unshaken, in spite of a daily occupation with the word of God."[1]

With these views, and in this spirit, did Wessel live and act at the University of Paris. He also visited several other cities of France, perhaps only incidentally, as he was passing, but perhaps also for the special purpose of becoming acquainted with other seats of education in that country. He himself tells us that he sojourned for a while at Lyons and Angers. At the former place, as he relates, he witnessed a very remarkable instance of fidelity in a dog,[2] which, expiring upon the grave of its master, had thereby exalted itself from the sphere of brutality to that of love, and the incident often floated before his mind as an admonitory and affecting pattern of devotedness. At Angers, where there was then a flourishing University, he appears to have delivered public lectures, and advocated with success the liberal opinions he entertained upon the subject of indulgences.[3] We have hitherto spoken as if Wessel's abode at Paris had been uninterrupted. This was not, however, the case, and we must distinguish between a first and

[1] Wess. opp. p. 789.

[2] Scal. Meditat. Exempl. 1, opp. p. 354 and 355. In the diocese of Lyons, during the middle ages, there was also a dog which, having lost its life while fighting for the child of its master, was by the simple piety of the people, venerated as a martyr and saint of children. See Steph. de Borbone in Echard Script. Ord. Praed. i. 193. Hase K. Gesch. §. 253.

[3] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 780 : Valde in ambiguo fluctuaret, fides nostra, si illi credendum, qui ipsemet saepe errat : ut in et ex Decretalibus convinci potest, et Rabineus *Andegavis* publice in cathedra arguenti mihi confessus fuit, inquiens : Si haec ita sunt, universum nostrum fundamentum falsum est. From a very remote period Angers had been the seat of an Academy, at which not a few celebrated men were professors, and among others Berengar. In 1364 a university was instituted, which distinguished itself especially in Jurisprudence. Bulaei Hist. Univ. Paris t. iv. p. 381.

second residence. The former, according to the accounts of the earlier biographers, extended to nearly sixteen years. He then, in 1470, travelled to Italy, and we afterwards find him once more in the French metropolis in 1473, at the time when the great blow was struck at Nominalism, and when Reuchlin also was there. On this latter occasion, however, his stay was of shorter duration. It would be no improbable supposition, that as a Nominalist he had quitted Paris, on account of the critical situation of his party.[1] At least, this is much more credible, than that he took part in the suppression of Nominalism. We now turn to his journey into Italy, which took place after his first and more prolonged residence at Paris.

The deficiency of the accounts renders it impracticable to give a complete history of *Wessel's visit to Italy*. We must be satisfied with indicating the important effects of the journey upon the inward development of his mind. It can scarcely be wrong to suppose that the revival of classical literature, and perhaps, also, the importance of Rome, as the centre of the Hierarchy, were the motives of his journey. As in the case of his celebrated

[1] Respecting the period of Wessel's abode at Paris, *Hardenberg* and the author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 17, state, Eum plus minus sedecim annis Parisiis versatum esse. They both also allude to the general rumour, that Wessel was expelled from Paris on account of the liberal opinions he expressed. Hardenberg supposes that he travelled from Paris to Rome in the suite of Francis de Rovere, the Pope elect, but remarks that this does not agree with the idea of his being expelled from the former city. If such a thing ever took place, it must have been at the end of Wessel's second stay at Paris. The whole matter, however, appears to be involved in doubt. It is more likely that Wessel voluntarily withdrew. That he stirred up adversaries in Paris, was naturally to be expected; nor is Hardenberg's statement at all improbable, that he was here first called *master of contradiction, a malevolis et invidis*. The account, however, of his formal banishment from Paris, appears to belong to the embellishments which tradition has added to his life. Were it historical, we must have had more certain evidence, whereas Hardenberg never heard it mentioned by any of Wessel's more intimate friends. Eff. et Vit. p. 17. I have further to remark that in the Codex Monac. which I have several times quoted, fol. 4, where mention is made of Wessel's expulsion from Paris, the words: Nunquam audivi illum pulsum fuisse Lutetia. Neque puto verum, are annexed, but are again stroked out.

countryman, Erasmus, we have no evidence that the beauties of nature or art in this richly-gifted land had made any material impression upon Wessel's mind. As the University of Paris in those days acted the principal part as the guardian and nurse of theology and science, the cities of Italy which Wessel visited, particularly Rome, Florence, and Venice, cannot, with justice, be denied the praise of having done most for Greek and Roman literature, and the cultivation of a higher taste. On this account, the most zealous students, both in youth and manhood, flocked from all quarters of Europe to Italy, in even greater numbers than to Paris. Wessel was one of those who went along with the stream. His inducement can scarcely have been the acquisition of a higher degree of classical accomplishment. For this he was already too old, and the interest of his mind, as we have already observed, was directed to philosophy and substantial facts, more than to the mere form of knowledge. He doubtless, however, perfected himself in the ability to consult the fountains of Greek philosophy, and even increased his acquaintance with it. What other advantage could he derive from his intercourse with the learned Greeks then resident in Italy, and which there can be no doubt he enjoyed? Above all, he renewed his acquaintance with *Bessarion.*[1] This person was one of the best informed of those emigrants, had received a theological education, was acquainted with Aristotle, and an admirer of Plato, whose philosophy he defended with great zeal against the Aristotelian George of Trebizond. Although his ecclesiastical position, particularly his transition from the Greek to the Roman communion, by which he paved for himself the way to the Cardinalate, may not be altogether exempt from the reproach of policy, he regains our esteem by his love of science and his patronage of the learned, which his exalted station[2] enabled him to exercise in a hospitable house and with a liberal hand. Intimacy with so celebrated a man, himself the author of a work in defence of the Platonic Philosophy, could not but strengthen the attachment to that philosophy which Wessel already felt.

[1] Bessarion died in 1472. Wessel was in Italy the last year of the pontificate of Paul II., that is 1470. Accordingly he may very well have seen Bessarion in Italy.

[2] Upon two occasions, he was all but elected Pope.

To this effect, the general tendency of education in Italy, and his stay at Florence, must have still more powerfully contributed. While to the north of the Alps, and especially at the universities which Wessel had visited, Aristotle still reigned with undiminished sway; in Italy a decided reaction in favour of Platonism had already commenced. The profound philosophical Mystic, *Nicolaus de Cusa*, and the talented physician, *Marsilius Ficinus*,[1] both likewise ardent friends of Christianity, laboured to promote it by their example and writings. For a considerable time the Platonic Academy had existed at Florence, and a fondness, like that which once prevailed in Alexandria, for amalgamating Platonic with Christian ideas, had revived afresh; and although Wessel was by his turn of mind not at all pre-disposed to resign himself wholly to the current, partly because he wanted speculative talent and liveliness of fancy, partly because he was too firmly grounded in scriptural and practical Christianity, and partly because an inward want rather prompted him vigorously and individually to embrace salvation as presented in the facts of its history, than to seek it in the way of philosophical disquisition and as connected with general ideas, we may nevertheless safely conclude that, surrounded as he was, his previous attachment to the Platonic philosophy would be greatly increased.

But Wessel's visit to Italy, and especially to Rome, was chiefly important from its influence upon his *views as a reformer*. Here, too, he reminds us of Luther, only that in his case, the residence in Italy had more important consequences, in respect that it occurred at a more advanced period of life, was of longer duration, and brought him into connection with more important personages. It is probable that even while at Paris he had been acquainted with Francis de Rovere. This individual was also so intimate with Bessarion, that they inhabited the same house, and Bessarion never published a work without first submitting it to his judgment.[2] It may have been that Wessel visited Italy

[1] *Nicolaus von Cusa* died in 1464, and had consequently departed this life at the time of Wessel's residence in Italy. Marsilius Ficinus died in 1499. Wessel might have been acquainted with him, but we have no certain information on the point.

[2] In Muratori Rer. Ital. Scriptor. T. iii. pars 2, p. 1054. See the proof at the bottom of the page.

in company with Francis de Rovere, who being at the time General of the Franciscans, used every exertion to enlist him in his order. It is said, however, that Wessel resisted these importunities, but improved his connection with a man of such influence, in order to promulgate, with greater freedom and security, his convictions respecting the abuses of the Church. Even although these statements cannot be certified,[1] it is yet incontrovertible that Wessel was on intimate terms with Francis de Rovere. He, however, who had been General of the Franciscans, came in 1471 to be Pope, as Sixtus IV. Next to Nicolaus V.[2] (whom Wessel is also said to have known) and Pius II., he was one of the most learned Popes of his century, had both studied and taught at several Italian Universities, and by his writings, preaching, and activity as a man of business, worked his way from stage to stage to the highest dignity.[3] It is true that he dishonoured the Papal chair by several unworthy administrative measures, of which the worst was his participation in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, by an ungenerous sternness of character which, towards the end of his days, provoked against him quite a storm of popular indignation, and by the pernicious example of nepotism which

[1] We find them, however, in *Hardenberg* and the author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 17, nor is there any such incongruity in them as to justify *Oudin de Script. Eccl.* t. iii. p. 2707, in declaring them to be mere dreams.

[2] This acquaintanceship, which de Rovere is said to have been also the means of forming (*Hardenberg*—Effig. et vit. p. 17), is, however, less probable. Nicolaus V. (Thomas de Sarzano) died as early as 1455.

[3] An old biography of Sixtus IV. is found in Muratori Rerum Ital, Script. Tom. III. pars 2. p. 1053—1068. It is incomplete and anonymous, and is ascribed by Muratori to the pen of the celebrated Bartholomew Platina. It extols the learning of Sixtus IV. He had frequented the principal academies, and lectured with great approbation at the most celebrated universities, so that there was scarcely a learned man in Italy at this time who had not been his scholar. Testatur (as we read, p. 1054) praeceptor meus Joh. Argyropylus, testatur Bonfranciscus Arlatus, aliique permulti. Hominem quoque frequenter audivit *Bessarion* Cardinalis Nicaenus, cujus familiaritate ita delectatus est, ut eodem persaepe contubernio usi sint, nihilque edere Nicaenus ipse unquam voluerit, quod non hujus lima prius et judicio emendatum esset. Of his connection with Wessel, as might be expected, no mention is made. There is, however, a reference to Henry von Zomeren. Among the works written by Sixtus prior to 1471, and while still Cardinal, the following is enumerated: Scripsit etiam *de futuris contingentibus* propter altercationem Lovaniae ortam inter *Henricum* quemdam virum doctum et omnes Scholasticos Lovaniensis

he bequeathed to his successors. At the same time, he undoubtedly earned for himself a high degree of merit, by embellishing the city of Rome, extending the Vatican Library, and liberally patronising the arts and sciences. Wessel had become acquainted with him at the period when he was distinguished merely as a man of learning, and before he had displayed, as the successor of St Peter, the qualities that have sullied his reputation. At the time of his elevation to the Papal chair, Wessel was at Rome;[1] and Sixtus IV. continued to shew the attachment which, as Francis de Rovere, he had once felt for him; while Wessel, on his side, maintained a noble freedom and independence towards his exalted patron. It is to be regretted that so few particulars respecting the connection between them have been handed down. The very fact, however, that Wessel in his writings makes no boast of this acquaintance, and still more, his whole attitude of hostility to the Papacy, shew, that he by no means suffered himself to be blinded. On the contrary, it is alleged, that in a work which has perished, he severely censured Sixtus IV. for his political conduct, and especially for pretending that he was exempt from the obligation of oaths, whether sworn or to be sworn.[2] We do not know that he exerted any influence over him;[3] though an act of the Papal administration renders this not improbable. In the year 1472, Sixtus sanctioned the Brethren of the

[1] We know from Wessel himself that he was in Rome *anno penultimo Pauli i.e.* 1470, *Opp. p.* 886. And as he saw Sixtus IV. as Pope, it is to be supposed that he was also there at the time of the succession of the one to the other. Paul II. died, and Sixtus IV. succeeded him in 1471.

[2] The account of it is given in Oudin de Scriptor. Eccles. t. iii. p. 2710. It was written in German, and is said to have treated de subditis et superioribus, seu quod subditi non usquequaque suis rectoribus obedire cogantur.

[3] Many even suppose that Wessel was private physician to Sixtus. *Ubbo Emmius* in his *Hist. Rer. Frisiacar. L.XXX. p.* 457, relates quite generally that Wessel was physician to the Pope, who could only be Sixtus IV. *Muurling*, p. 38, and in the 6th Appendix 114—117, reckoned this probable. I will not gainsay the account given of Wessel's medical knowledge, for which old and incontrovertible testimonies are extant. But the specific averment that he was the Pope's physician in ordinary is of a later date, and may belong to the exaggerations in his history.

Common Lot. The connection between them, however, is best characterised by an anecdote, which is so consonant to the spirit of Wessel, that we can scarcely doubt its truth, and which, it is said, he was himself fond of relating.[1] On the elevation of Francis de Rovere to the Papal chair, Wessel having waited upon him to pay his obeisance, was invited to ask a favour. To this he replied, with a modest frankness, "Holy Father, you are well aware, that I have never aspired after great things; but now that you occupy the place of supreme Priest and Shepherd upon earth, my desire is that your reputation may correspond with your character, and that you may so administer your exalted office, that when that chief Shepherd shall appear, among whose servants here below you occupy the highest place, he may say to you, Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord, while you on your part may be able confidently to aver, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold I have gained beside them five talents more." On the Pope remarking that that was a matter which belonged to him, and that Wessel should now ask a boon for himself, he said, "Well then, I ask you to give me from the library of the Vatican a Greek and Hebrew *Bible*." "It shall be done," proceeded Sixtus, "but, foolish man, why did you not ask a bishopric or something of that sort?" "Because," rejoined Wessel, "of that I have no need."[2] By order of the Pope, he received a Bible, and this remarkable manuscript is said to have long been preserved in a convent near Groeningen, where he spent part of his declining years.[3]

That at the seat of the hierarchy, and in his intercourse with ecclesiastics of high rank, Wessel did not disown the convic-

[1] It is, however, doubted by Oudin and Brucker. The former is throughout hypercritical in the life of Wessel. Thus among other things he contests, *De Scriptor. Eccl. T.* III. *p.* 2707, his residence at Rome, of which Wessel has himself informed us. In the present instance, the evidence of Hardenberg is so much the less to be set aside that he expressly remarks, Hoc (Wesselus) ipsemet consuevit narrare. *Muurling*, p. 37, acutely observes, that an expression of Alexr. Hegius in a letter to Wessel may contain an allusion to the fact. He says, Plus enim semper tibi placuere aurea verba, quam aurei nummi. Although, doubtless, the words have quite a good meaning without this special reference.

[2] The anecdote is also related in verse by Hagenbach.

[3] Vit. et Effig. prof. Gron. p. 18. The author, who lived in the middle of the 17th century, speaks of having himself seen fragments of this codex.

tions of his mind, appears from disclosures which he himself makes. He relates an occurrence which took place in the reign of Paul II., and therefore at a time when the Pope was not yet his personal friend, and which gave him an opportunity to declare his principles on the subject of indulgences, at Rome, and before men belonging to the papal court, in the same undisguised manner as he had formerly done at Paris.[1] Upon this and other occasions, he learned that ecclesiastics in the immediate vicinity of the Papal court, entertained opinions upon such subjects still more liberal than his own. In so doing, these persons had not, like the Reformers and their precursors, to struggle against piety and a deeply-rooted faith, or to endure an inward conflict of the head with the heart. They had long before divested themselves of all religion, and pursued their way, treating the prevailing prejudices with indifference or with ridicule. But they paid dearly for this state of mind. For, on the other hand, nothing was any longer truly sacred to them, and they had lost the capacity of being deeply and seriously earnest in any cause. In this way, Wessel, like Luther during his brief sojourn at Rome, learned the inward hollowness and deeply rooted corruption of the lofty hierarchy; And although he felt the attractiveness of the science of Italy, all he saw of the dominant ecclesiasticism could only repel him. He accordingly returned, with his sentiments as a Reformer strengthened, and appears to have never afterwards felt any inclination to revisit Rome.[2]

[1] Wessel narrates the circumstance in rather a plain way in his letter to Hoeck, Opp. p. 886 and 887. I quote his own words. After oberving that Magistri nostri Parisienses Wilhelmus de Phalis, Johannes de Bruxella, Johannes Picardus were present, he proceeds: Invitato mihi (sic) per Cubicularium Papæ, Henricum Dalman, in Camera Parlamenti prandentibus nobis, per jocum dixit Magister Wilhelmus de Phalis in aurem Joannis de Bruxella: Vellem nunc adesse Magistrum nostrum Jacobum Schelwert; et subriserunt ambo, ut Cubicularius verbi et risus causam quaereret, et illo causam dante, propter meam singularem de Indulgentiis opinionem, non parum ex loco illo agitato mihi, solatiose satis Cubicularius hoc accepit, inquiens, *non hoc novum esse.* Quin etiam postea *Curiales ipsos audivi plenis verbis in meam sententiam consentientes, et id liberius, quam ego.*

[2] According to the account of John *Acronius*, in his dedication of the works of *Regnerus Prädinius*, *Basle* 1563, p. 5, Wessel was subsequently invited by a Pope, who must either have been Sixtus IV. († 1484),

We have no circumstantial information respecting Wessel's residence in other Italian cities. It is certain that he visited *Florence and Venice*.[1] At the former place, the study of the Platonic philosophy, which had revived afresh, must have deeply interested him. But he here also became acquainted with a very unfavourable aspect of the Italian character, and congratulates his honest countrymen at Zwoll on their inferiority to the practised Florentines,[2] in the art of making charges. In Venice he was present at the remarkable transactions of a Papal commission to enquire into the life and miracles of the Patriarch of Aquileia,—[3] a proceeding required by law as a preliminary to canonization,—and convinced himself that a strictly regulated investigation, such as he witnessed, although always resting upon a very insecure basis, is yet a better and safer method of making a Saint, than to leave the matter dependent upon the fluctuating opinions of the multitude.

It is said that Wessel also visited both *Greece* and *Egypt*, to which countries he could only have gone from Italy. In evidence of the first of these visits, it is usual to refer to his own declaration, that he had read the Greek Aristotle in Greece itself; and of the second, to other sayings which tradition has preserved as having also come from himself, to wit, that in Egypt he had vainly sought for writings of Solomon, and other lost pieces of Hebrew literature; and that, on a certain occasion, when one of his scholars proposed to him a question of difficulty, he had answered, "Wait till I return once more from Egypt, and I will tell you." It is scarcely possible not to cherish some doubts on this point.[4]

or his successor, to pay another visit to Rome, but courteously declined the invitation. The thing is possible, but is involved in too much doubt to admit of a decision.

[1] This appears not only from a panegyrical ode, with which his friend Antonius Liber saluted him upon his return home:

Nec te Roma potens, nec te Florentia bella,
Nec Venetus precibus te retinere potest:

but from passages of his own works.

[2] Scal. Medit. I. 13, Opp. p. 212.

[3] De Magnitud. Pass. cap. 63, Opp. p. 583.

[4] This journey to Greece is first mentioned by *Gerh. Geldenhauer* in his account of Wessel's life, and that to Egypt by *Hardenberg*. The author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 15, in his day expressed doubts on the

The notices handed down by tradition are much too fluctuating, while they are destitute of all intrinsic probability. For what purpose should Wessel have travelled to Greece, at that time in so turbulent a state? The only object of his search, which was the learning of Greece in its men and books, could be found better and more conveniently in Italy. In the society and with the aid of natives, and so with Greece in a manner around him, it was easy for him, even in Italy, to read Aristotle, and that was probably all he meant by the words we have cited above. The journey to Egypt appears to be wholly fictitious; and if Wessel really answered the question of the scholar in the way specified, it must have been a proverbial or jocular expression.

There is historical evidence, however, that some short time after his residence in Italy, Wessel was living at *Basle*, to which he proceeded, having first returned to Paris. Falsehood and exaggeration, indeed, have been mixed up with the fact; for it has been said, that he attended the Council held in Basle, and by his deliberative wisdom and talent for controversy, played an important part in that memorable assembly.[1] But Wessel was much too young to have been present even during the last years of its

subject of these visits, as was afterwards done by Bayle, Brucker, and others. Wessel himself nowhere takes notice of them, whereas he frequently alludes to his other travels and places of sojourn. Indeed, the words of Paulus Pelantinus, a contemporary, seems to contain positive evidence against them, when he says in his Epicedium upon Wessel:

> Et nisi sors claudum, pedibusque tulisset iniquis,
> Aegyptum duram *superasset* et ostia Nili.

No doubt the *superasset* is equivocal, as it may signify that he would have extended his travels even farther than Egypt. Still, as appears to me, it is better to translate, He would even have braved the hardships of a journey to Egypt. Moreover, the intrinsic unlikelihood of the matter, under existing circumstances, seems too great to admit of its being believed. *Muurling* enters into a minute discussion of it. Beil. 4. s. 108—112.

[1] It is true the vouchers for this are first *Hardenberg*, and next the author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 27. The chronological difficulty, however, far outweighs their testimony. The Council closed its meetings at Basle on May 19th 1443, at which date Wessel was, at the most, 24 years old. We would have to suppose, however, that he had attended the meetings of the Council some considerable time before their termination; and then he was much too young to have exer-

sitting, and the only authentic part of the account is, that in 1474 or 1475, he met with Reuchlin once more in that city, prosecuted his former acquaintance with him, and was of use to several other young men, in guiding them to the knowledge of antiquity and its languages. This visit to Basle is of no great consequence in the life of Wessel.[1] Far more attaches to his sojourn at Heidelberg, of which, therefore, we shall give a fuller account.

The University of *Heidelberg* was founded almost contemporaneously with that of Cologne. The Bull of confirmation was expedited by Urban VI. in the year 1385, and the charter of institution by Count Palatine Ruprecht in 1386.[2] It was constituted exactly after the pattern of that of Paris, owing mainly to the fact that its first Rector, the celebrated Nominalistic divine, Marsilius von Inghen,[3] had formerly been a professor there. The

cised the influence he is said to have done. It is also related that he came to Basle with Francis de Rovere, but this does not tally with the narrative of that person's life. Comp. Bayle Diction. t. iv. p. 2868, ed. 3. *Muurling* s. 34.

[1] On Reuchlin's presence at Basle, see *Mayerhoff* p. 10, 11. His intercourse with Wessel in this place is mentioned among older authors, by Melancthon, Martin Simon, and Joh. Saxo. The first says in his preface to Agricola's Dialect. declam. t. i. p. 249. Fuerat (Agricola) aliquamdiu familiaris civi suo Basilio Groningo, Theologo Parisiensi, quem reversum ex Gallia Basileae *Capnio* etiam se audivisse dicebat. The last in his Orat. de vita Rud. Agricolae ibid. p. 602: Lutetia pulsus propter taxatas superstitiones venit (Wesselus) Basileam . . . . narrabatque Capnio, eum Theologiam et Graecas et Ebraicas literas eodem tempore tradidisse studiosis, si qui eum audire cupierant. This last clause seems to involve an intimation, that Wessel did not here give public lectures, but taught privately, which will account for his not being mentioned in the acts of the university. That circumstance affords Brucker no sufficient ground to raise a doubt of Wessel's having ever been at the university at all. Consult also Majus vit. Reuchl. p. 13. 154. Alting Hist. Eccl. Palat. p. 9. Seckendorf Hist. Luth. i. 226. Muurling s. 42—47.

[2] The older works on the history of the Heidelberg University are fully enumerated in Fr. Pet. *Wund's Beitræge z. Geschichte der Heidelb. Universitat. Mannheim.* 1786.

[3] Information respecting him may be found in Car. Casim. Wund de

chief circumstance which distinguished it from the university of Cologne was, that, by virtue of its whole plan, no predominance was conceded to theology, but all the different branches of knowledge were allowed full freedom to develop. This advantage the University of Heidelberg owed to the fact, that although subjected, as the circumstances of the time necessarily required, to the oversight of the Bishop of Worms, as supreme Arbiter, it was not, like Cologne, situate at the Episcopal seat, but enjoyed the oversight and protection of a temporal prince; and an admirable prince he was, who, at this very time, surrounded by noble and sagacious counsellors, watched over the prosperity of the university. Even under the more military government of *Frederic the Victorious*, the Hero of the Palatinate, the university had not been neglected,[1] although it obtained a less degree of attention and favour. But Frederic's successor, Elector *Philip the Ingenuous*, himself no stranger to the sciences, generous in his disposition, and agreeable in his manners, pursued, from the commencement of his government in 1476, the noble plan of collecting around him,[2] and appointing to the university, the most distinguished men of Germany; and by that means soon raised the whole institution, and especially the theological

Marsilio ab Inghen, primo Universitat. Heidelb. Rectore. Heid. 1775. and in Joh. Schwab. Syllabus Rector. Heidelb. quatuor seculor. Heidelb. 1786. p. 1—6, where other works upon the same subject are mentioned. Marsilius was also probably a native of the Netherlands, for amongst the many conjectures respecting the place of his birth, the most probable is that the Inghen was a little village which still survives in the diocese of Utrecht.

[1] Frederic the Victorious reigned from 1449—1476, and did enough to entitle him to the praise of posterity as a patron of the university. He confirmed its liberties, augmented its revenue, maintained order and peace, shortened the vacations, extended the license of giving public lectures, instituted more frequent disputations, ornamented the library and rendered it more accessible to the public use. Compare *Kremer's Lebensgeschichte Friedrich's* I. *Mannheim* 1766. *Buch* vi. s. 523—526. *Urkundenbuch* s. 469. *C. Cas. Wund de orig. et progr. facultatis jurid. in Acad. Heidelb. Progr.* ii. p. 3—11. *Heid.* 1768, and *Fr. Pet. Wund Beitr. zur Gesch. der Heid. Univers.* s. 90.

[2] *John Saxo* says of him in his discourse de vit. Rud. Agric. in Melanchth. Declam. t. 1. p. 600: *Philippus*, ut erat splendidus et non rudis literarum, et magna comitate praeditus, volebat aulam habere ornatam literatis hominibus. Other information is to be found in my Memoria of Joh. von Dalberg. p. 31. not. 13.

faculty, to the most flourishing state of prosperity. In this way Heidelberg represented the fresh aspiring spirit of the age, and rose to higher and higher importance; whereas Cologne, having become the prey of *Obscurantism*, declined and fell.

It was in order to co-operate in the regeneration of the university, as all accounts represent, that Wessel was invited by the Elector to Heidelberg. At an earlier date he had received very advantageous proposals from the same quarter, as we know from his own statement. Upon that occasion, however, he declined them, his mind, in its youthful ardour, being more attracted towards the arena upon which the chief conflicts between the jarring systems of theology and philosophy were being waged. It is easy to conceive, however, that subsequently, under another prince, a similar offer was again made, with which he then complied.[2] At least, it is certain that, under Philip, many men holding views similar to those of Wessel were invited to Heidelberg. Nor can it be objected that, according to the statement of several of the older writers, Wessel received no fixed salary at

[1] See above, p. 289-290.

[2] *Hardenberg* and the author of the Effig. et Vit. make the residence of Wessel, which we here mention, anterior to his journey to Paris; and they are followed by Goez in the Comment. de Wess. p. 8, Bayle, Schröckh, and others. But that they have fallen into error is evident from what we have already said, p. 289. At that time he did receive an invitation to Heidelberg, but declined it. Perhaps he may have visited the place, a supposition which would account for the origin of the mistake. The error of these authors is also evidently the consequence of their assigning so early a date to his more prolonged residence, while on the other hand, they represent the Elector Philip as having given him the call, who yet did not succeed to the government before 1476. The correct statement of the matter is given by Henry Alting, who, as is well known, was himself for some time (1613—23) a professor at Heidelberg, and who, in his Historia Ecclesiast. Palat. p. 132, says: Factum autem A. C. 1477, ut *Philippus*, Elector Palatinus, de restauranda Academia Heidelbergensi sollicitus, quae inde a prima fundatione viris doctissimis et clarissimis fuerat nobilitata, *Wesselum* ad Professionem Theologicam Heidelbergam vocaret, quo quidem ipse animo obsequendi profectus est. Caeterum hoc ipsi a Proceribus scholae permissum non est, quod titulum Theologiae non haberet. . . . . Relicta cathedra Theologica, ad Philosophos se contulit, et aliquamdiu literas Graecas, Hebraicas, Latinas et Philosophiam docuit; eaque in professione primam quasi sementem jecit purioris doctrinae, non dissimulans, quid in recepta formula confessionis et cultus desideraret. This account of Alting is also adopted by Seckendorf in his Comment. de Luth. p. 226, and by Hottinger in the Hist. Eccl. t. iv. p. 39.

Heidelberg;[1] for, in the first place, the statement itself is not absolutely certain, and, secondly, the thing stated was in that age, and especially at that place, of no unfrequent occurrence. We have an instance of it in Dionysius, the brother of the far celebrated Reuchlin, who was called to Heidelberg as professor of Greek, but received no pecuniary remuneration.[2] The grounds of doubt, on the one hand, being thus not decisive, while on the other, the more ancient authors are unanimous in attesting it, and concur in their accounts, we do not hesitate to assume, as a fact, that Wessel did reside at Heidelberg during the reign of the elector Philip.[3] Accordingly, his entrance upon this field of

So likewise the more recent authors of the Palatinate, *Struve* in his Pfälzischen Kirch. Historie Frankf. 1721. s.2—4. *Kayser* in his Hist. Schauplatz der alten berühmten Stadt Heidelberg, Frankf. 1733. s. 109. It is true Struve and Kayser falsely identify Wessel with John of Wesel, but except in this particular, they agree with each other and with more ancient writers.

[1] Non tamen pactus est de certo stipendio, sed voluit facere experimentum et scholae et sui ipsius. So Hardenberg and the author of the Effig. et Vit. p. 16. Their statement, however, may arise from confounding the earlier and later call of Wessel, and thereby loses much of its importance.

[2] *Erhard* Gesch. des Wiederaufbl. B. II. s. 193.

[3] I have been at great pains in searching the manuscripts in the Heidelberg Library and the archives of the University for more circumstantial information respecting Wessel's abode at this place. But all my investigations have been in vain. Two manuscripts in particular that seemed to promise some return deceived my expectations. One entitled *Historia Reformationis et Mutationis Ecclesiae in Palatinatu sub Philippo*, 206 pages in fol., is a somewhat negligently executed manuscript, with corrections by a later hand, of *Altings Pfälzischer Kirchengeschichte*. The other, of which I have made abundant use in the first volume, *Historia Universitatis Heidelbergensis*, 228 pages in fol., contains, although, without strict arrangement or connection, many interesting and original contributions to the history of the University of Heidelberg (up to the close of the 16th century), and also furnishes numerous biographies of the eminent men who taught or were educated there; for example, Rud. Agricola, Jac. Wimpheling, Joh. Oecolampadius, Seb. Münster, Herm. Busch, and others. It even touches, as we have seen, the Inquisitory trial of Joh. of Wesel, but does not give the slightest account of John Wessel, or so much as mention his name. We are therefore obliged to have recourse to printed sources of information. Johann Schwab, Catholic Professor of Theology at Heidelberg in 1786, in his *Syllabus Rectorum*, enumerates the Rectors of the University from 1386 to 1786. He gives biographical notices of the more remarkable of them, and appends in

labour must have taken place about 1477, and consequently near the 58th year of his age.

The noble object of the Elector in giving this call to Wessel, encountered opposition from the narrow-mindedness of the Theological faculty. Appealing to the letter of the statutes, but probably prompted by other motives than reverence for law, they succeeded in interdicting the stranger from lecturing on Theology, upon the ground that he had not received the degree of Doctor; and upon his applying for it, they objected, that the honour could not be conferred upon any one not previously ordained a priest. An insurmountable obstacle to his appointment was thus successfully discovered. For he refused on any account to submit to the tonsure, and with a jocular allusion to the circumstance, that no priest could be capitally punished without being first degraded, in consequence of which many escaped the penalties of the civil law, he is reported to have given as a reason, "That he was not afraid of the gallows, so long as he kept his wits."[1] The older authors do not inform us which of the professors it was who took the lead in this opposition. A very obvious conjecture, however, may be formed upon the subject. The opposition proceeded from the Theological faculty, and among the theologians of the time, Doctor *Nicolaus von Wachenheim* was by far the most eminent.[2] He was a skilful, practised, and, as he had attained a great age, even an inveterate scholastic; and although a Nominalist, was yet a strict defender of the doctrine of the church, in which capacity, as we

several cases a short list of the *Nobiles et Præcipui*, who matriculated during their rectorates. Among these are to be found many canons, preachers, masters, licentiates, and bachelors. Wessel's name, however, does not occur. Schwab is not always perfectly correct in his statements (he makes an error, for example, in the date of Melancthon's matriculation), but personal inspection of the more ancient books has satisfied me that Wessel's name is wanting in those years in which it might have been expected. This, however, is no ground for doubting the fact of Wessel's having actually been at Heidelberg. He could not be inscribed in the list either of rectors or of students, and in these lists we ought not to expect to find his name.

[1] The story is told by *Hardenberg* s. 4, by the author of the *Eff. et Vit. p.* 16, and *Goez* Commentat. de Wess. p. 8, and many others.

[2] Nicolaus of Wachenheim (a place once belonging to the Palatinate,

have seen,[1] he took part in the prosecution raised against John of Wesel for heresy. The whole tendency of his mind was such as naturally to make him an opponent of Wessel, and being possessed of great influence, he had it in his power to do much, and probably did all he could, to drive him away from theology. At the same time, his colleagues, among whom we find *Herwig* of *Amsterdam* and *Jodocus* of *Calw*, likewise taking part in Wesel's prosecution,[2] seem to have been of the same mind with him. Excluded in this way from the theological faculty, all that Wessel did was, as a Master of Arts, to deliver lectures in the faculty of philosophy. These were partly philological, upon the Greek and Hebrew languages, and partly also upon philosophy in the stricter sense. But they afforded him frequent opportunities of freely speaking his mind upon the defects and corruptions of the Church and of theological science. At the time, along with other Scholastic disputes, the conflict between the Nominalists and the Realists raged at Heidelberg,[3] and we may

but now to Rhenish Bavaria) was upwards of 50 years professor at Heidelberg, first in the faculty of the Arts, but subsequently, and then for a much longer period, in that of Theology, and according to Tritheim's account, he was *velut theologorum princeps, in maximo pretio habitus.* He was the only person after Marsilius of Inghen, who *seven times* filled the office of Rector. He died in 1480, the year after he had sat as judge in the process of inquisition against John of Wesel. His works are: 1. *Quaestiones sententiar. Lib.* 1.; 2. *Sermones et Orat. ad Clerum et Patres.* Compare *Trithemius de Script. Eccl. c.* 864 *p.* 206, *and Catalog. viror. illustr. p.* 165. Trithemius pictures him as Vir in divinis scripturis eruditissimus et in saeculari philosophia egregie doctus, ingenio excellens, clarus eloquio. Further notices of him are given by *Schwab* Syllabus Rector. Heidelb. p. 54.

[1] See vol. i. p. 341, 342.

[2] Ibid. 342.

[3] *Kayser* in his *Histor. Schauplatz v. Heidelberg* relates, ss. 113, "There were also under this Elector various unprofitable wranglings at the University. For example, a keen dispute was maintained as to whether the vocative case is a *suppositum*, or in a proposition may occupy the place of a subject? On which question there was not merely much useless squabbling, but the parties passed from words to blows. . . . At the same time, too, the dispute between the so-called *Reales* et *Nominales* was carried on, and became the longer the hotter, embroiling with each other the so-called bursaries. These bursaries were then three in number, the Dionysian for the poor, the Swabian, and the New. The last took the side of the *Nominales*, and the two others

well suppose that Wessel took part in it. As the Realists, however, were the stronger party, and as Nicolaus of Wachenheim is the only one among the theologians designated as a Nominalist, (though that did not hinder him from joining in the condemnation of John of Wesel, who belonged to the same party), it is possible that that conflict may have contributed to Wessel's expulsion. How long Wessel continued his labours, we do not exactly know, though we may safely conclude that it was an interval of several years. But short although his connection with Heidelberg was, his vigour and talents left deep traces behind him.[1] It was he who sowed the first seeds of that purer Christian doctrine, which we find springing up here with so rich a growth about the commencement of the 16th century.

It is pleasing to observe anywhere the first streaks of light, but most of all in one's own beloved country. Let me therefore be permitted to paint with a few strokes the importance of *Wessel's* residence in the *Palatinate*, in connection with the commencement of the Reformation in that district. Long before Wessel's day, and about the year 1406, the celebrated friend and fellow-soldier of Huss, *Jerome* of *Prague* had, during a short abode at Heidelberg, produced a great excitement. He posted on the

that of the *Reales*." A variety of particulars respecting the disputes of this University under the reign of Philip the Ingenuous, are given in the work we have quoted above, *Historia Universitatis Heidelberg. mscrpta.* It relates, p. 78, the dispute about the vocative case,—at pp. 92 and 93, that about the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, in which, by order of the Elector, the members of the university were strictly forbidden to take any part,—and at p. 94 that between the Realists and Nominalists which assumed a very sinister appearance, inasmuch as it at last issued in armed encounters between the different bursaries. Imo eo vesaniæ, says the manuscript, p. 95, res haec tandem eruperat, ut 40 studiosi Bursae Realistarum conarentur hostiliter expugnare Bursam novam.

[1] We have no precise information respecting the cause of Wessel's departure from Heidelberg. *Struve*, p. 3, says, "he withdrew, because he could not agree with the Theologians, and appeals to the words of Petri de Scriptor. Fris. Dec. viii. 4, p. 78: Incidit tandem in controversiam de religione cum Theologis, ex qua in periculo fuit, ideoque relictis Academiis in Patriam se contulit et in privato studio se continuit. But Petri's account of Wessel is too brief and general, to serve as an authority for so special a point. It is possible that Wessel may have quitted Heidelberg in consequence of actual or threatened persecutions, but we have no well authenticated information upon the subject.

lecture rooms and doors of the Church of St Peter, a list of theses, impugning the reigning dogmas, and especially that of transubstantiation, and maintaining that John Wickliffe was not a heretic, but "a holy man."[1] He was not permitted, however, to carry the challenge into effect; but, as an arrogant pretender, prohibited from lecturing, disputing, or responding in public.[2] *Wessel* was more fortunate. He obtained at least permission to teach, and a distinguished scholar, *Rudolph Agricola*, succeeded him, and carried on the work which he had begun. This countryman and friend was of a very different turn of mind. He possessed a soft, gentle, and cheerful disposition, even in science addicted himself chiefly to the beautiful, and acquired a very superior knowledge of classical literature, and, as the fruit of such studies, a high degree of educational polish. Wessel, on the other hand, severe and earnest, and on all subjects more anxious about the substance than the form, regarded only as a mean, what in Agricola's eyes was an end, and lived for no object but the amendment of theology and the Church.[3] The relation between them is the same as that between Erasmus and Luther. For these reasons, it is true, Agricola could not to the full be the successor of Wessel.[4] In fact, in the early period of his connection with the University, his labours were mainly employed in advancing ancient literature, and founding the library which afterwards became so famous. During the last years of his life, however, which he closed at Heidelberg in 1485, at the early age of 42, he occupied himself chiefly with theology, and fanned afresh his love for the principles upon which he had once come to an agreement with his paternal friend. Often had the two, in confidential interviews,[5] deplored the darkness

[1] At least these points occur with others more metaphysical, among the Conclusiones, quas *Hieronymus* Parisiis, Coloniae, *Heidelbergae* dogmatizavit, legit, tenuit et pertinaciter defendit. Herm. von der *Hardt* Concil. Constant. iv. 645, 646. *Royko* Gesch. des Const. Concils iii. 340.

[2] *Struve* Pfälz. Kirch. Hist. s. 2.

[3] Compare the fuller parallel in *Muurling*, p. 53.

[4] Compare besides other works, Car. Cas. *Wund* de celeberrima quondam Biblioth. Heidelb. Heid. 1776.

[5] Such is the narrative of *Goswin von Halen*, who, having once been famulus to Wessel, was at a later stage of life made manager of one of

of the Church, the profanation of the mass, and the yoke of clerical celibacy, often discoursed upon the true doctrine of justification by faith and the worthlessness of human traditions, and mutually recognised the dignity of Holy Scripture as the sole fountain of faith. These principles Agricola now recalled to mind, and spoke in their defence, not only at court, where he was held in great estimation, but also in the circle of his academical acquaintances.[1] Nor did he stand alone; other men of high influence associated themselves with him. He had in Heidelberg two noble friends, with whom in former years he had become acquainted as his pupils in Ferrara, John of Dalberg and Dietrich of Plenningen. Among these *Dalberg*, now chancellor to the Elector-Palatine, and Bishop of Worms, shines as the model of a high-born and noble-minded patron of science.[2] He had been chiefly instrumental in calling Agricola to Heidelberg, admitted the polite scholar, like a brother, into his house, entertained him at his table, and was in general the worthy centre of scientific life and vigour, around which all the eminent scholars, and especially the friends of the new tendencies, assembled, whether

the Brother-houses at Gröningen. He was often present at these interviews between Wessel and Agricola, in his old age felt great delight and interest in calling them to mind, and sent a report of them to Wittenberg, probably to Melancthon. For it was most probably by communication with him, that John Saxo received most of the particulars related in the discourse upon the life of Agricola, which is to be found among Melancthon's declamations. Saxo appears also to have made enquiries among aged people at Heidelberg, and learned nothing but what was good about Agricola. Melancthon Declam. t. i. p. 600, At this place, he describes the relation between Wessel and Agricola in the following terms: Inde cum in Belgicum rediisset Wesselus saepe adiit senem Rudolphus, natu minor, sed in literis Latinis et Graecis eruditior et flagrans studio Christianæ doctrinae. Idque ipse Agricola saepe de se praedicabat, se quod reliquum esset aetatis, collocaturum esse in sacras literas: qui si vixisset, haud dubie egregiam operam Ecclesiae navasset. *Quanquam et illa studia Ecclesiæ profuerunt*, quod nostros homines ad meliorem discendi rationem revocavit. *Id meritum non est leve ducendum.*

[1] *Alting* Hist. eccles. Palat. p. 132. *Struve* Pfälz. Kirch. Hist. s. 5. Kayser Schauplatz s. 110.

[2] In this light I have endeavoured to paint him in my Memoria Joh. *Dalburgii*, summi Universitatis Heidelbergensis patroni. Heidelb. 1840, where the rest of the relative literature is mentioned, and the state of the university in other respects described.

they actually resided in Heidelberg like *Vigilius* (Wacker from Sinsheim) and *Dracontius*, or were merely transient visitors like *Conrad Celtes* and *John Trithemius*.[1] He was also the main cause in inducing *John Reuchlin*, another and still more celebrated pupil of Wessel's, to take up his abode for a while at Heidelberg. Reuchlin's stay was indeed of short duration, and it cannot be distinctly shown that he was connected with the University. But just as little need we doubt that he must have exercised an animating influence upon the studies and religious views of the place. We are told that, in noble fellowship with Dalberg and Plenningen, and in presence of the Elector Philip, he used to discourse upon subjects of antiquity and general history, and that out of these conversations, by desire of the prince, an outline of general history took its origin from his pen. We also know that, among other labours, he composed a satirical play, which was acted by students[2] in the residence of the Bishop, a man of a pious but at the same time cheerful character, and a great lover of art, and that this was the first representation of the kind in Germany. We may be sure, however, that these were not the only services rendered by Reuchlin to Heidelberg; but that he also improved the noble position he occupied, in fostering the prosperity of the University, and kindling in susceptible minds an aspiration after higher things. Next to him we have to mention *Pallas Spangel*,[3] who had Melancthon for a boarder, was a modest improver of the prevailing method of tuition, and laboured for thirty-six years;

[1] See respecting all this the treatise now referred to and the passages quoted, but especially, the very laborious commentations of *Klüpfel* de vita et scriptis Conradi Celtis, Frib. 1827. We may instance what he says respecting Dracontius at pages 167, 168, and respecting Vigilius in various passages, especially p. 155.

[2] *Mayerhoff* Reuchlin und seine Zeit, s. 37. *Erhard* Gesch. des Wiederaufbl. B. 2. s. 189—191; and my Memoria Dalburgii. p. 19 and 38. This drama was printed under the title of: Jo. Reuchlin scenica progymnasmata, by Thomas Anshelm at Pforzheim 1509. A copy of this imprint is now in the Munich library.

[3] *Alting* Hist. Eccl. Pal. p. 136. *Struve* Pfälz. K. Hist. s. 7. App. Leben Brenzens s. 259 sq. John Brenz, by Hartmann and Jäger, B. 1, p. 21.

Jodocus Gallus,[1] a pupil of Agricola, and the intrepid *Jacob Wimpheling*,[2] commended by Reuchlin as a main pillar of religion, and who not only rebuked the common clergy by his forcible words, but put them to shame by his example. By the instrumentality of these men, Heidelberg, at the commencement of the 16th century, became a place of great importance for the study of the sciences in general, and especially for the reformation of Theology.[3] Many distinguished youths there pursued their studies who subsequently became themselves ornaments of Universities and Reformers of the Church; among these the chief was *Philip Melancthon*,[4] subsequently the teacher of all Germany. Besides him, we have to mention Martin Bucer, Theobald Billicanus, John Brenz,[5] Erhard Schnepf, Martin Frecht, Peter Sturm, and others. In 1518 Luther himself visited Heidelberg, and there held a memorable disputation,[6] which produced great excitement, and kindled in the soul of many a youth the first spark of an unextinguishable flame. It is thus that, in this district, a streak of light extends from the days of Wessel, by whom it was first kindled, down to the period of the Reformation, and the ablest men who made it the scene of their labours may be designated with truth as his spiritual descendants; —a noble proof of what inestimable importance even the brief abode of a great and enlightened Christian in a place susceptible of his influence may become.

[1] *Alting* says of him, p 136: Inprimis assentiens doctrinae ejus de religione, quam ipse Agricola ex Wesselo hauserat et deinde illustrarat.

[2] Respecting him see *Schwab* Syllab. Rector. p. 73. *Erhard* Gesch. des Wiederaufbl. B. i. s. 428—467.

[3] Hic igitur fructus est illius sementis et institutionis, says Alting, quem Ecclesia et Academia Heidelbergensis ex *Wesselo*, Agricola, Capnione ac scriptis ipsius Erasmi percepit: unde deinde caetera, de quibus in ipsa Reformatione dicendum erit, secuta sunt.

[4] Melancthon's residence in Heidelberg is, as is well-known, described to us in Joach. *Camerarii* Vit. Melanchth. cap. 3. p. 11. ed Strobel.

[5] Respecting that of *Brenz*, Joh. Breuz von *Hartmann* and *Jäger* B. 1, s. 18 ff. See also my contributions to the Stud. und Krit. 1841, Hft. 3, s. 591.

[6] *Struve* Pfälz. K. Hist. s. 9—15.

CHAPTER THIRD.

WESSEL IN HIS OLD AGE. GENERAL FEATURES OF HIS CHARACTER.

We now turn to the closing period of Wessel's life, which embraces the stage of more advanced manhood, extending from about his 60th to his 70th year, and presents to our view an honourable and beneficial industry exercised in tranquillity and retirement. After passing some time at Heidelberg,—I would suppose about two years—he returned to his native land, never again to leave it; was there joyfully received by his countrymen, and honourably welcomed by one of them[1] in a Latin ode, thus at last exchanging an unsettled and agitated life for one of calm and concentrated activity, which had now doubtlessly become necessary to him. This period he spent chiefly in convents, partly with the Regular canons upon Mount St Agnes near Zwoll, partly in the monastery Adwerd in Friesland, and partly, too, in a nunnery at Groeningen, where the pecuniary means, or perhaps the simple recommendation of his patron, David of Burgundy,[2] the Bishop of Utrecht, procured for him a comfortable residence, and careful attention to his wants. Enjoying a pleasing leisure in the society of persons of both sexes, and especially of the young, who were susceptible of his influence, Wessel now occupied himself wholly with theological researches and labours, and devoted his spare hours to correspondence with his numerous friends. Almost all the works and letters which we possess from his hand, demonstrably belong to this period.

[1] This was *Antony Brye*-or Frey, from Soest in Westphalia *(Antonius Liber Susatensis)*, President of the Gymnasium at Zwoll, an institution towards which, after his friend *Hegius*, he acted a very meritorious part. See Muurling s. 48. His short Carmen panegyricum in laudem et jucundum adventum ex Italia praestantissimi et admirandi Philosophi M. *Wesseli*, Groening. may be found in Wesseli Opp. p. 710.

[2] This person, for a long period, took an interest in Wessel, and extended to him a powerful protection. We possess a letter from the Bishop of date 1473, in which he assures him that, during his life at least, his enemies should never touch him. See infra p. 346.

While thus enjoying in the reverence of noble-minded contemporaries the foretaste of his future fame, he could not fail to encounter, at the hand of others, hostility and persecution. It was scarcely possible that a man who thought so freely, and expressed himself so candidly, should, in the existing condition of the Church, pass through the world without trouble. Many of the Scholastic teachers beheld the absolute ascendancy which they had exercised over the young, undermined by his preponderating influence. Some could not but painfully feel his superiority in controversy, and on other similar occasions. While the monks generally hated him for nothing more than because he was the determined foe of superstition and the upright friend of truth. For these causes the dominant clergy, and especially the mendicant monks, had, at different periods of his life, set on foot various persecutions against him, with the circumstances of which we are imperfectly acquainted. One attack, however, with which he was menaced by his enemies, calls for some mention here, in consequence of its having elicited from him declarations which are still patent to inspection.

About the end of his stay at Heidelberg—many, indeed, suppose that the facts we are about to mention led to his total retirement from academical life—or, as is more probable, very shortly after his return home, and at any rate, in the year 1479, the Inquisitors in the Rhine provinces began the prosecution against *John of Wesel*, which we have related in the first volume. It resulted in the condemnation of his doctrines and writings and in the imprisonment of his person, in spite of a recantation which he made. Wessel was on intimate terms with John of Wesel, entertained a high respect for him,[1] was conscious of participating in his main convictions, although he differed from him on particular points, and especially in the style of his controversy. It is to be presumed, from the contiguity of Heidelberg and Worms, and the frequent intercourse between the two cities, that he had also been personally connected with him for some years back. Nothing, therefore, could be more natural than the sup position that the process against Wesel was but the prelude to a

[1] In the work de Mag. Passion. p. 537, he calls him *Doctor subtilis*. His opinion of him in full will be found in an epistle which we shall quote in the sequel.

future one against Wessel, whom, owing to his more serious deportment and more commanding position, they shrank from making the first object of attack.

Such at least was the view which Wessel himself took of the matter. The news of what had befallen one with whom he agreed in opinion, soon reached his ears. By parties whom he had no reason to doubt, he was even told that John of Wesel had been sentenced to be burned to death, and he must have been altogether insensible, if the matter had not made a deep impression upon his mind. His fancy began to see in the distance the fagots already blazing for himself. Determined, however, to meet the danger like a man with foresight and prudence, he wrote to a friend, Master *Ludolph van Veen*[1] (De Veno), Dean of the Church of Utrecht, who possessed great legal knowledge, and held the degree of Doctor both in civil and ecclesiastical law. The letter,[2] which shows us that he was already in the Netherlands, will also pourtray to us his state of mind. "It is not," he writes, "in virtue of our mutual agreement, but because the flames are already blazing, that I feel compelled to address you, and ask your advice. Nor do I apply to you merely as a lawyer and a faithful friend, but much more as one specially qualified to give good counsel, from having been yourself exercised in early youth by similar, or more properly the same, incidents and trials which now, as I greatly fear, are awaiting me. You have heard of the danger in which that venerable man, Master John of Wesel, is at present involved. Now, although, as you have often heard me say, I disapprove of his absurdities, which are extravagant and scandalous for the people ;[3] still his erudition and acuteness are so great that I can-

[1] *Ludolph van Veen*, a native of Kampen, was in 1471 made Dean of the chapter and President of a court (called Discus, de schijve), by Bishop David of Utrecht. He died in 1508. Compare what is said and what is quoted respecting him by *Muurling*, p. 74. Along with the court over which Veen presided, the Bishop had introduced the law of France and Burgundy in place of that of Friesland and Saxony. See Burman Utrechtsche Jaarboeken iii. 109, 184, 474. Ludolph van Veen was the intimate friend of Bishop David; accordingly, by writing to him, Wessel made a virtual though indirect application to his more powerful protector.

[2] See *Wess.* opp. p. 920.

[3] See vol. i. p. 299.

not avoid loving him and taking an interest in his fate. O, how much better it would have been for him, as I often remarked in our conversations at Paris, if, like you and me, he had first, by way of practice, taken part in the conflicts of the Realists and Formalists, and not until then, nor without foresight and preparation, but as if from a citadel and watch-tower, anticipated the coming assault! I learn from my most intimate friends that he has been convicted to die by fire. The expression may indeed be incorrect, for he who has been convicted in a disputation, acknowledges his error, in which case, either he never was, or, if he was, ceases any longer to be, obstinate. Be that, however, as it may, the fate of the man, and of such a man as he is, gives me great pain. On many a former occasion, his inconsiderate and fearless way of speaking has filled me with anxiety, for although it had a certain tinge of scholar-like polish, and sometimes, too, perhaps of Catholic truth, still there was something very offensive in bringing what he did before the unlearned and ignorant multitude to the great scandal of the simple-minded. I learn also from the same friends, that when the inquisitor is done with him, he will immediately come down to me,[1] and set an enquiry on foot. Now although in this cause I do not fear even a trial, still it will entail much disquietude and suspicion, expense and tribulations, but above all, calumny, particularly on the part of the Abbot of the Old Mount and some of the Cologne professors, whose envy and hatred—for I am speaking to one who has experienced them—you may easily infer from what happened to yourself. In order, therefore, that I may make my way by a shallower ford and with a lighter step through these assaults, if any such are in the wind, I expect your advice both on the manner in which to await their approach, and in which to encounter them when they arrive. And I hope, too, that you will lose no time in informing me what occurred to yourself in similar circumstances, and what steps you recommend, lest any sudden attack surprise me unarmed and unskilled in the perils of law. Write to me, therefore, quickly; It will be refreshing as water to a thirsty man, for I repose not less upon the wisdom of your counsels than upon the justice of my cause.

[1] Down the Rhine is meant, and this expression unmistakeably intimates that he was then residing in the Netherlands.

I am afraid of no danger which I might have to encounter for the purity of the faith, only let calumny be far away. All this, as I have communicated it to you in confidence, I entreat you to hold secret from others. Zwoll, April 6th."[1]

This letter, if it does not, as must be confessed, breathe the courage of a Zwingli or a Luther, evinces a manly and Christian steadfastness of mind, resolved not to flee from the impending danger, but desirous likewise to be prepared for its approach. What he anticipated, however, did not take place. No attack was made upon him. For as to the stories which authors of a later date[2] have told of Wessel's being prosecuted and of his emitting a recantation, they all obviously originate in confounding him with John of Wesel. It is probable that the inquisitors were less hopeful of the success of an attack upon him, partly in consequence of his eminent personal qualities, and partly, no doubt, because Bishop David of Burgundy vouchsafed him special protection. As Wessel, who was now in the evening of life, lived in close connection with this prelate, it is necessary that we should pourtray his character with some exactness, only premising that it would be incorrect to infer an entire congeniality of mind between the patron and the protégé.

David of Burgundy,[3] a natural son of Duke Philip the Good, and half-brother to Charles the Bold, was, by the influence of his father, and after the Pope had set aside the regular election of Gisbert of Brederode, promoted to the See of Utrecht, and in-

[1] Undoubtedly in 1479, for it was in the February of that year, that the inquisitorial process against John of Wesel was raised. The court met at Mayence *Feria sexta post purificationem*. *D'Argentré*, p. 292.

[2] For instance, *Wharton* in Append. ad Cav. Hist. Lit. fol. 154. *Du Pin* Nov. Bibl. Auct. Eccles. T. xii. p. 106. *Goez* Commentat. de Joh. Wess. p. 13 and 14, etc.

[3] We have a narrative of the life of this Bishop, in the form of a chronicle, from the pen of Wilh. *Heda*, Historia Episcopor. Ultraject. notis illustr. ab Arn. *Buchelio*, Jcto Bat. Ultraj. MDCXLII. p. 291—315. The writer of the notes, p. 307, blames Heda, who was Canon of Utrecht, and lived under the protection of the house of Burgundy, for the excessive praise he bestows upon Bishop David. And yet the many foibles of David's character appear with sufficient clearness from Heda's narrative, and from the facts themselves. See also *Burman* Utrecht. Jaarboeken D. ii.

stalled into his office, under the protection of the military. He was the 55th Bishop of the See, and held it from 1456 to 1496, consequently for about forty years. During this long incumbency, he appears to have at first maintained an honourable position, but afterwards to have fallen step by step, until at last he sank into the grave, unlamented by his subjects.[1] It is true, he is commended for magnanimous and liberal sentiments, fervent zeal in defence of religion and the privileges of the Church, and a lively and active interest in the cause of art and science;[2] At the same time, even those who, on the whole, commend him, are compelled to admit, that he was addicted to love, immoderate in anger, and jealous of other influential prelates and noblemen, that he reposed an excess of confidence in people of a low condition, whose probity he believed himself to have tested, and was not exempt from a certain degree of the frivolity of the French.[3] More ambitious of being feared than loved, he failed to gain the affections of his subjects, who, on several occasions, rose in insurrection against him.[4] Towards his adversaries, too, he behaved with cruelty, and is even accused of having employed poison to rid himself of Gisbert of Brederode, who was his chief rival.[5] His authority continued to flourish during the life of his powerful half-brother, Charles the Bold, after whose death, in 1476, he lost the esteem of the people.[6]

[1] At the end of his biography, *Heda* says of him, p. 306: Frigida erat inter ipsum et Trajectanos amicitia. And p. 294: Cum in fine, sive senii taedio affectus, sive illorum culpa, qui a consiliis astabant, minus placide regebat, beneficia priora facile cessere in oblivionem. Compare also p. 305, where it is remarked that the people had only imputed to him *unicum egregium facinus toto tempore regiminis sui.*

[2] *Heda* in l. c. p. 292.

[3] *Heda* says, p. 293, Plus aequo indulsit amori, et iracundiae intemperans erat. De Praelatis aut Nobilibus, qui auctoritate aut potentia praestabant, suspectam continue gerens solicitudinem, malens timeri quam amari, gallica levitate non omnino carens, infimosque aliquos ad consilia sua privata admittebat.

[4] Ibid. p. 296, 297.

[5] P. 294. Praefectus de Bredenroede. . . . brevi post obiit, suspicione, uti aliqui volunt, extinctus veneni.

[6] Ibid. 294. Quae cadente Carolo cessarunt. Declinabat etiam Episcopi auctoritas, ita quod ejus in populum, et populi erga ipsum affectio deinceps elanguit.

At last, enfeebled by age, he allowed himself to be governed like a child, and became so vacillating and unsteady that he revoked to-day what he had but yesterday decreed. To add to his misfortunes, he was a continual victim to gout,[1] so that it was a deliverance both for himself and his people, when, upon the 16th of April 1496, he departed this life.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the points of difference between such a man and the subject of our memoir. In spite, however, of the dissimilarity of their characters, two things seem to have formed a bond of union betwixt them; viz., a taste for polite learning, and a desire of ecclesiastical reform. The lively interest felt by Bishop David for art and science, and his distinguished liberality towards those by whom they were cultivated, are commended even by the writers most severe in their censures of him.[2] Like Leo X., he delighted in the society of distinguished men, and sought to augment the splendour of his court by intellect and refinement.[3] A high degree of ecclesiastical pomp, fine church music, for which he maintained a numerous choir of singers,[3] and the select company of learned men, flattered his ambition, and afforded him enjoyment. Even on this account, he was pleased to have about him a person of so great talent and celebrity as Wessel. But besides, he appears not to have been disinclined to ecclesiastical improvements, so far as they did not endanger his own interests; and in order to promote a reform among the clergy, required them to undergo a public trial. His experiments, however, in this way, were not encouraging. An examination which he set on foot, issued in the melancholy result, that out of 300 candidates for orders only three passed with credit. It was observed by some one present, that "the time was not yet ripe for producing theologians like Augustine and Jerome," to which David indignantly replied, "But they need not be

[1] Ibid. p. 306. For the cure of his gout, *Wessel*, who is sometimes designated his medical adviser, is said to have prescribed baths of tepid milk.

[2] So *Buchel* the annotator on Heda, p. 307, where he cites several authors who bear testimony to David's liberality.

[3] *Heda*, p. 294, 306, and especially 292, where it is said, "Oblectatus etiam Musica in tantum, ut publico aere cantorum coetum pro oratorio suo aleret.

asses and bottomless pits of ignorance."[1] To cleanse such an Augean stable as this, he could not possibly have had a better adviser than Wessel. But the Bishop himself possessed too little moral energy to effect any permanent good.

The whole circumstances of the relation between *Wessel* and *David of Burgundy* are not sufficiently patent to enable us either to understand or judge of them. The earliest evidence of their connection is a letter of David's, dated 1473,[2] in which he begs a visit from Wessel, that he may converse with him on many subjects, and have some one "with whom to refresh his mind." He then promises him his protection, in these forcible words, "I know *that there are many who seek your destruction;* but while I am alive to protect you, that shall never be." And from that time he seems not to have withdrawn from him his favour and support. Nor can we blame Wessel, situated as he was, for availing himself of these. He did not live to see the last and worst days of the Bishop, having predeceased him six years.

Having honourably fought his way through all previous trials, and successfully escaped the danger we have just mentioned, Wessel was now desirous to devote the remainder of his days to scientific and devout contemplation, and outwardly to live at peace.[3] He knew the value both of the active and *contemplative life*, in their right place, and in one of his works[4] has spoken at large upon the subject. In the same tone as Thomas à Kempis and other mystics, he represents the active life under the image of Martha, the contemplative under that of Mary. The former is *Eusebia* or practical piety which works outwardly; the latter is *Theosebia*, the direct aspiration of the soul to-

[1] M. *Schoockius* de Bonis Eccles. p. 435. *Muurling* s. 75 and 76.

[2] The letter was first printed in *Schoockius* (who possessed several others from Bishop David's pen that were never published) de Bonis Eccles. p. 433, and afterwards in Muurling p. 45.

[3] It was probably about this time that he chose for his motto: *Bene qui latuit;* for it would not have suited the earlier period of his life. These words are given as Wessel's motto in the Athenæ Belgicae ed. *Swertius*. Antwerp. 1628. p. 700.

[4] In the Scala Meditationis, Pars 1. Cap. 1. sqq. Opp. p. 194—197.

wards God and its absorption and complete felicity in divine things. The two are sisters: both devote their love to the Saviour, and enjoy His in return; both refer to God, and possess divine qualities. But the part chosen by Mary is the better, and hence the true way is to rise from the active to the contemplative life as to the higher. "Mary's,"[1] he says, "is indeed the better part, but it is a part which is not given to all, and which is known only to those by whom it has been received. It was not given to Martha, and hence she had no notion of its blessedness; and judging that because a thing was unknown to her it did not exist, she believed her sister to be idle. . . But the Lord Jesus, the gracious umpire between those two most loving sisters, affectionate to both, because the Father of both, and the inspiring author of their respective holy duties, decides between them with a wise regard to each, acknowledging with praise the good service of the one, and instructing her ignorance, but at the same time giving the preference to Mary, because performing, as it were, a higher service, she had welcomed the divine Word into the inner abode of her spirit, whereas Martha had but received the Word incarnate into her outward dwelling, and fed Him with visible food. . . . Piety, for the sake of God, but not with a direct reference to him, is in the spirit of Martha. Piety, constantly directed towards him, is in the spirit of Mary." Wessel, fully qualified to appreciate every bodily exercise, was well aware that external quiet and sequestration are not, in and of themselves, means to perfection; that a man may be as silent as a Carthusian,[2] and yet harbour scattered and wandering thoughts; and that, while the life is as methodical as a Pythagorean's,[3] the roots of evil may flourish rankly in the heart. For that reason he did not ascribe so great a value to mere monastic exercises and virtues, as was done by Gerhard Groot and all his school. On the other hand, he knew the great worth of inward tranquillity, the true repose of a mind pervaded by the peace of God. According to his view, the mind when agitated and stormy, cannot be the abode of the Deity, and he often quotes[4] the

[1] In l. c. p. 195.
[2] Scala Medit. i. 9, p. 206 and 207.
[3] Ibid. Cap. 10, p. 207.
[4] *E.g.* Scala Medit. i. 7, p. 203.

passage from Isaiah, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest."[1] On the contrary, he extols the peaceful and serene tranquillity of the true sage:[2] "How tranquil true wisdom is, we learn from the example of those who have devoted themselves to her service; for the more they do this, the more tranquil they become. True wisdom enjoys perfect repose, and yet is not, on that account, inactive, but in rich abundance scatters to the farthest distance the seed of lasting fruit, so that in fact we cannot but regard her as something divine, uniting, in so high a degree, activity with calmness. . . . And how serene wisdom is, is shown by the firm and lasting serenity of those who, without distraction, or mirth, or laughter, scorn as deceptive all mean delights, because they regard them as unworthy and polluting. And how exempt from wants she is, how content, how rich in and satisfied with herself, we may learn from the desire of the wise man, which, if the infirmities and wants of the body did not interpose, would always point in one way to the study of wisdom, and to see and taste that the Lord is good. . . . . And as God made all that he has made by his word, so would the wise man who is His image upon earth, reform into a better and happier condition all tribes, nations, kingdoms, and peoples, if their leaders and princes would but give ear to his admonitory word, as he himself inwardly listens to the doctrine of wisdom, and so not merely attains to insight, but learns to delight in obedience. More than the thirsty man rejoices in the limpid spring, more than the hungry in offered food, more than the lover in the joyful message from a distant land, does the wise man rejoice in secret, calm, confidential, edifying, cheerful, and enlightened converse[3] with Wisdom, which is his mistress.[4]" Impressed with these sentiments, Wessel believed that the time

[1] Is. lvii. 20.

[2] Scala Medit. i. 4, p. 197.

[3] The contemplative states of mind, under which Wessel fell into peculiar trains of reflection, were of such importance in his eyes, that he frequently noted with great exactness their time and place, and referred to them even in scientific treatises. See Scala Medit. iii. 7, p. 275.

[4] The passage reminds us of *Suso;* but how different are the two in their intercourse with heavenly Wisdom, the one a poetical lover, the other a judicious friend!

was now come for him to direct the current of his life more into the channel of peaceful contemplation. In doing so, however, he did not cease to employ his pen and tongue as industriously as ever, but only gave to his industry a more calm and exclusive character. He frequently visited his friends and received their visits in return. It was his custom annually to repair to the scene of his early education, Zwoll and the contiguous Mount St Agnes. Here he was surrounded with the memories of former years, especially of his paternal friend, Thomas à Kempis; and in no spot of his native land did he love so much to dwell.[1] The place was also convenient for another reason, namely, because his friend and protector, David of Burgundy, spent several months of every year in the vicinity of it, at Vollenhoven, where it was easy for them to meet.[2] From the abode thus endeared to him by the remembrances of youth, Wessel was wont to resort to the monastery Adwerd, where he had many friends and scholars, to whose number he was continually adding.

The rich and beautiful abbey *Adwerd* or *Aduard*,[3] in what is now the province of Gröningen, was besides other ornaments, par-

[1] In his fragmentary notices, after mentioning the Collegium Agnetanum, as the dwelling-place of Thomas à Kempis, Hardenberg proceeds to say, Quod Wesselus propterea reverenter colebat et nullo loco libentius, quam illic erat, quotiescunque apud nostrates versabatur. Cod. Monac. fol. 12.

[2] Ibid. in the immediate sequel.

[3] The monastery Adwerd or Adwert (properly speaking, Ade or Oude-Werd, the Old Werth, or in the popular language, Auert), situate two leagues from Groeningen, in the so-called Westerquarter, was in its day an abbey of great celebrity for wealth and property, the beauty of the building, especially of the church, and the valuable library. It is now, however, not only suppressed, but, to a great extent, demolished. The church is still standing. The dwelling-house of the present clergyman is part of the old fabric of the monastery. In the 16th century, the greatest part of the library fell a prey to the flames, and the small remnant that was rescued was incorporated in that of the Academy of Groeningen. These particulars have been communicated to me by the pastor *Van Senden*. The chief claim of Adwerd upon our attention, is founded on its educational institutions. It had two schools,—one situate within the walls of the monastery, the other, called *de roode* School, near the little town of Bedum. The one was for the elementary branches, the other for the more advanced studies of philosophy and theology. Whether the school in Adwerd itself, or that of Bedum was the higher, is doubtful. The former opinion is maintained, in the Hist. Episcopat. Gron. p. 32 and 46.

ticularly distinguished for its educational institutions. There was a sort of Academy, frequented by the youth from all Friesland, who, in a lower school, were taught the elementary branches of knowledge, and then promoted to a higher, where, under professors of greater learning, they prosecuted their studies in philosophy and theology. These schools had formerly been in a very flourishing condition, the celebrity of the teachers being on a par with the number of the scholars. But they were now somewhat upon the decline. Wessel made great efforts to revive them, in which, at the outset, he was supported by the well-intentioned Abbot, *Henry Rees*. At his death, however, hindrances were cast in his way. During his visits to Adwerd, he endeavoured to operate upon the minds of the monks and the susceptible youths.

Oudheden en Gestichten van Gron. p. 218 and 347; *Muntinghe* Orat. in ducent. Natal. Acad. Gron. p. 82; the latter by *Hardenberg* in the Vit. Wess. p. 18. The school at Adwerd was so numerously frequented that, according to Hardenberg, no fewer than ninety deaths among the students and professors took place in the course of a single summer. Among its eminent teachers, we have to note, in the 13th century, Richard de Busto, a learned Englishman, previously professor at Paris, and who died in 1266, bequeathing to the library some philosophical treatises which he had composed; also *Emanuel*, once Bishop of Cremona, a person of noble extraction, who quitted his country on account of the feuds between the Guelphs and Gibellines; and who, on entering the magnificent church of the monastery at Adwerd, is said to have cast his crosier upon the ground, with the words, *Haec requies mea*. He lived in Adwerd thirty years, and died in 1298. *Hardenberg* p. 28. See more modern works in *Muurling* p. 59. Besides, Hofstede *de Groot* Gesch. der Broederenkerk te Gron. p. 13. *Hoogstraten* Woordenboek s. v. Auwert. *Bruchernus* Gedenkboek van Stad en Lande p. 293. and *Oudheden* p. 110 and 189. In the fifteenth century, the spirit of the schools had somewhat declined, but was successfully revived by Wessel. His biographer, Albert Hardenberg, himself resided for several years in the Abbey. It is in a letter to him that another admirer of Wessels, his former famulus, *Goswin van Halen*, thus describes the then existing state of the monastery: Deinde gratulor tibi etiam et toti monasterio Adwerdensi, cui spero honori eris, et pristinam eruditionem per te ac tui similes restitui. Novi *Adwerdiam* ante annos quadraginta et eo plures: tum doctum virum si quaesivisses, hunc in Adwert invenisses, aut alibi nusquam in tota Phrisia. Erat ea tempestate Adwert non tam monasterium, quam Academia. Horum mihi testes essent, si superessent, Rodolphus *Agricola*, *Wesselus* Groningensis, Guil. *Frēdericus Pastor*, Joh. *Oestendorpius*, qui adhuc superest, Rod. *Langius* Monasteriensis, Paul. *Pelantinus*, Alex. *Hegius* . . . et alii, qui totas hebdomadas, ne dicam menses, in Adwert diversari soliti sunt, ut vel audirent vel discerent, unde et doctiores et meliores quotidie efficerentur.

He encouraged them to the study of Hebrew, explained to them the Psalms, pointed out the mistakes in the Vulgate, answered the questions, and solved the difficulties they proposed, and occasionally read aloud a passage from the original Hebrew text, at which all that the monks could do was to wonder at the outlandish sounds. These exertions were not unsuccessful. Adwerd, for a time, united together all the men of learning in Friesland and the surrounding countries. A historian,[1] almost contemporaneous, relates: "At that time there lived in the monastery many patterns of the purer monachism, and this continued to be the case so long as Wessel's memory was reverenced, and they who had been his scholars survived. Of these I myself knew and have spoken with at least fifteen. With not a few of them, too, I became acquainted, partly in neighbouring monasteries, partly in the districts of Groeningen and West Friesland, and partly in the monastery of Sibbeciloa,[2] and elsewhere. But the monks of Adwerd expressed themselves most freely about Wessel."

In like manner Wessel every where endeavoured to operate upon the young, and sow the seeds of improvement in their souls. He directed their attention to what was defective and pernicious in the prevailing method of theological education, called them off from the study of modern Divines to the sources of heathen and Christian antiquity, and thus prepared their youthful minds for the rise of a brighter day to theology, which he never doubted would come at last, but of which he only caught a distant view, as Moses saw the promised land, but was not permitted to tread its long expected plains. Like Luther, to whom, indeed, it was an easier task, not merely because his lot was cast in an after period,—and time moved forward then as rapidly as now,—but also because he bore within him, in a still larger measure, the power to create a new theology, Wessel used to fortell, with the most perfect certitude, the speedy and total overthrow of scholasticism. To one of his favourite pupils, John Oestendorp,[3] after-

[1] *Hardenberg* in the Vit. Wess. p. 17.

[2] Sibbeciloa or Zibekelo was situate in the parish Hardenberg, in the province of Overyssel, and was also called the Convent of our dear Lady of Galilee. Its history in H. van R. (Ryn) Oudheden en Gestichten v. Deventer, Kampen etc. fol. p. 640—48.

[3] John *Oestendorp* or Oostendorp was canon of the church of St Lebuin, at Deventer, and distinguished for his eloquence. As suc-

wards canon of the church of St Lebuin, at Deventer, who applied to him for advice about the prosecution of his studies, he said, "Young friend, you will live to see the day[1] when the doctrine of Thomas and Bonaventura, and such other modern dialectical theologians, will be rejected by all truly Christian divines." Upon another occasion he declared, "It will come to pass ere long that these irrefutable teachers, with their hoods and cowls, both black and white, will be forced to retreat within due bounds."[2] In this manner Wessel guided the current of scientific life into a new and better channel, and as an inevitable consequence, gathered around himself, as the animating centre, a circle of admiring friends and pupils. As they had once done to Gerhard Groot and Florentius Radewins, persons of all ages from the whole surrounding district, resorted to the old and experienced man in quest of advice and instruction; And it is a pleasing task to attend more closely to his intellectual intercourse with friends and pupils, and to pass these one by one in review.

We do not know all the *friends* with whom, in his native country, Wessel maintained an intimate connection. But letters from his pen, and which have been preserved to this day,

cessor to Hegius, he presided over the school at Deventer. Gerhard Geldenhauer, who was also a pupil of Hegius, speaks of Oestendorp as his teacher. So also Hardenberg, Wessel's biographer. See *Delprat* p. 28, and ap. 20, p. 156. This last citation contains the following passage respecting Oestendorp, taken from the manuscript Auctarium de Script. Eccles. by Butzbach, fol. 55: Joh. *Ostendorpius*, cognomento *Bellert*, natione Teutonicus, patria Westphalus, Ecclesiae Daventriensis Canonicus, Daventriensis gymnasii et meus post piae recordationis Alex. Hegium rector et gubernator, cujus ob egregiam tubalis eloquentiae promptitudinem hoc cognomen Bellert (latrator ?) inditum esse ferunt.

[1] The prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. Oestendorp was still alive about the year 1528, at which time Scholasticism had received the last fatal blow from the Reformation. *Gabriel Biel*, who is usually designated the last of the Scholmen, died in 1495, after having—as is strange enough—in his old age entered into one of the institutions of the Brethren of the Common Lot, or, at least, connected himself with them. See Delprat. Ap. 17. s. 152.

[2] Both of the above-cited declarations of Wessel have been preserved by Gerhard *Geldenhauer*, a disciple of Ortendorp. Of the former he expressly says: Id ego a jam canescente Ostendorpio in templo D. Lebuini audivi, anno 1528. X. Cal. Martias. See likewise *Hardenberg* p. 6. and the author of the Eff. et Vit. p. 18.

acquaint us with some of them. And if, from the number of those whom we know, we may venture to draw a conclusion as to the probably greater number of the unknown, it will appear, that very many clergymen of Christian sentiments and liberal views were at that period living and labouring in the Netherlands. Nor, indeed, could it possibly be otherwise in a country from which the impulse which produced the Reformation partly came, and in which the event itself was so favourably received. The highest in rank, but, certainly, by no means the nearest to his heart, among Wessel's acquaintances, was Bishop *David* of *Utrecht*, whose connection with him we have already depicted. Besides him, we have to mention *Jacob Hoeck*, latinised *Angularis*, doctor in theology and dean of Naeldwick, Master *Ludolph van Veen (de Veno)*, doctor in civil and ecclesiastical law, and dean of St Martin's in Utrecht, *Bernard* of *Meppen*, a Regular canon,[1] Brother *John* of *Amsterdam*,[2] and Master *Engelbert* of *Leyden*.[3] He also cultivated the friendship of ladies of congenial mind; and among others we still possess an extremely beautiful letter from his pen to Gertrude *Reyners*, a nun in the convent of Clearwater.[4] The monastery Adwerd was at the time the favourite resort of eminent men, who either already possessed or were in quest of learning. Here the good Abbot *Henry* of *Rees*, whose piety and attainments in science were alike admirable, was his friend. Here he held intercourse by turns with *Rudolph Lange*[5] from Munster, with *Paulus Pelantinus*, *John Canter*, and *Lambert Fryling* from Groeningen, with *Arnold* of *Hildesheim*, and the learned Knight *Onno* of *Eusum*. Here he enjoyed

[1] Procurator Zilae.

[2] He is mentioned by *Wagenaar* Beschrijving van Amsterdam iii., 195. *Brant* Hist. Reform. i. 56.

[3] Respecting him see *Orlers* Beschrijv. van Leyden, ed. 2. p. 336.

[4] Sanctimoniali in Claris Aquis. The monastery *Klaarwater*, or the convent of the Holy Virgin of Klaarwater, was situate in the province of Gelderland, near the little town of Hattem. For information respecting its institution and interesting objects, consult H. van *Ryn* Oudheden en Gestichten van Deventer etc. p. 698.

[5] Rudolph *Lange* (Langius) is sufficiently well known as one of the original revivers of science in the Netherlands. Compare respecting him Herm. *Hamelmanni* Orat. de Rod. Langio in his Opp. geneal. Lemg. 1711. p. 257. *Erhard* Gesch. des Wiederaufbl. Th. 1. s. 345. *Delprat* Verhandeling. s. 153. and Ap. 10. p. 287.

the instructive and entertaining conversation of the younger, but highly distinguished, men, *Rudolph Agricola* and *Alexander Hegius*. An eye-witness, Goswin van Halen, recounted to *Regner Praedinius*,[1] an admirer of Wessel's in after years, how when a youth at Adwerd, he had often waited at the table where Wessel and Agricola prolonged their friendly converse until far in th e night, how he then lighted them home, and helped Agricola to take off his shoes, for he occasionally drank more than enough, whereas no one ever saw Wessel the worse of wine. The literary intercourse of Wessel with Alexander Hegius appears in the clearest light from an epistle addressed to him by the latter. That celebrated philologian and teacher, who ranks among the six to whom Germany and the Netherlands are so greatly indebted for the revival of ancient literature, was then labouring in the important school at Deventer, which he had raised by his exertions to a most flourishing state of prosperity, had just returned from a scientific excursion to the rich library of Nicolaus of Cusa,[2] and wrote an account of it to Wessel. "Most honoured Sir, I send you the Homilies of St John Chrysostom, in

[1] *Regner Praedinius* (Reinier van Winsum) does not belong to the number of Wessel's actual disciples, but certainly to that of his most zealous and grateful admirers. We owe to him also several particulars respecting his life. He was specially active as teacher of St Martin's school at Gröningen, which flourished greatly under his care. *Delprat* p. 117, says of him: "Oost-en Westfriesland, Braband, Vlaanderen, Duitschland, Frankryk, Italie, Spanje en Polen bezorgden hem gansche Scharen, die rondom hem als het ware eene Hooge School vormden." The report is confirmed by one of his scholars, Joh. *Acronius*, in the preface to the Opera Regneri Praedinii, Basil. per Oporin. 1563 fol., where he calls him praeceptor eruditissimus, and says: publice in schola singulis diebus *quatuor* integras horas praelegebat. There is a biography of him by Van *Swinderen* in der Gröninger Maandschrift tot nut van't Algemeen, 1809, p. 33. Several other particulars respecting him and his connection with Wessel will be met with in the sequel. The foregoing citation, in which Praedinius gives Goswin van Halen's report about Wessel, is found in the Exposition of Luke vii., in *Praedinii* Opp. p. 198.

[2] This celebrated Cardinal had, in the year 1458, and at his native town of Kuss, on the Moselle, in the Archbishopric of Treves, founded an hospital, endowed it with a rich revenue, and afterwards bequeathed to it his books and mathematical instruments. The institution still exists, and retains until this day the regulations given, and the books bequeathed, by the illustrious founder.

the hope that the perusal of them will afford you some enjoyment, being well aware that you were always fonder of golden words than golden coin. I have been, as you know, to the Cusan library, and have there found a number of Hebrew books before wholly unknown to me; but not so many Greek ones. So far as I can recollect, there were Epiphanius on Heresies, a very large work, Dionysius on the Hierarchy, and Athanasius against Arius and Climacus, which I left where they were. I brought along with me, however, Basil on the Work of Creation, and his Homilies on the Psalms, the Epistle of St Paul, and the Acts of the Apostles, the biographies of several Greeks and Romans by Plutarch, with the Symposium of the same author, some works connected with grammar and mathematics, some poems of profound meaning, on the Christian religion, from the pen, if I am not mistaken, of Gregory Nazianzen, and some discourses and prayers. Inform me if there be any of these which you would wish to see, and it shall be immediately despatched. For it is not proper that I should possess anything in which you do not share. If at present you can, without inconvenience, spare the Gospels in Greek, I beseech you to lend them to me for a while. You wish more particular information respecting my method of tuition.[1] I have followed your advice. All learning is pernicious if acquired at the expense of piety Farewell! and if you have any wish, inform me of it in the persuasion that it shall be fulfilled. Deventer."[2]

In the list of Wessel's *scholars* the two who, both as the oldest and the most distinguished, undoubtedly claim the highest place, are *Rudolph Agricola*, and John *Reuchlin*. We have already spoken of them, and have now to rank along with them a goodly company, mostly of Dutchmen, viz., *Herman Torrentius*,[3] from

[1] De institutione mea undoubtedly means the method of teaching and training which Hegius practised with the young.

[2] The letter is printed in various works, among others in *Goez* Comment. de Wess. p. 27, and Wess. Opp. p. 24, also in Alex. Hegii Dialogi, Daventr. per Rich. Pafraet, 1503.

[3] Herman *Torrentius*, or *Van der Beeke*, born at Zwoll, was in 1490 teacher in the Brother-house at Groeningen, and died in 1520. He was the author of several philological works, by which he provoked violent attacks, but these he met with calmness and moderation. *Hamelmann* de doctis Westphal. viris. T. i. p. 115, 116. *Delprat.* p. 55 and 120.

Zwoll, a philologian, and master of the schools at Groeningen and his native town, *Gerhard von Cloester*, *Gerlach von Casterem*, *Rudolph Hilbrand*, called Bolens, and two persons whom we have already mentioned, John Oestendorp and John Canter. This is also the place to notice Wessel's *famulus*, Josquin or *Goswin*, from Halen,[1] on the Moselle. He was a very intimate and grateful scholar, collected all the compositions of his master on which he could lay his hands, and has transmitted many of the incidents of his life. At a more advanced age, he gained great respect as the overseer of a Brother-house at Groeningen, and having lived to see the Reformation, died in the year in which the Augsburg confession was delivered. The bias he received from his master and preceptor, necessarily disposed him to espouse the cause of the Reformers. He entered into correspondence with Melancthon, and furnished him with the information respecting Wessel, which has been carefully preserved in an oration commemorative of Rudolph Agricola, delivered, under Melancthon's auspices, by John Saxo.[2] This beautiful discourse speaks of him with esteem as a pious and venerable old man, but of Wessel himself with admiration, warmly extolling his lofty genius, comprehensive erudition, bold and liberal views, and

[1] Goswinus Halensis was, at the close of the 15th and the commencement of the 16th century, governor of the Brother-house at Groeningen. See concerning him Biblioth. Brem. Cl. vi. p. 90. *Gerdes* Hist. Evang. Renov. Append. p. 4. *Delprat* Verhandeling p. 115.

[2] The discourse from which we have already made several extracts, is to be found among *Melancthon's Declamations*, t. 1. p. 597. ed. Argent., and hence is often cited as one of the Reformer's own productions. No one, however, who has perused it, can entertain that opinion, for the author shows himself to be a Frieslander, and from the Low countries. It was incorporated with Melancthon's Declamations, not only as having been written by one of his pupils, but because Melancthon in all probability furnished the materials, and gave it his sanction. In so far it expresses what were also Melancthon's views. The real author was John *Saxe* or *Saxonius*, a native of Hattstedt, in the territory of Holstein. He studied at Wittemberg, where he also graduated as Master of Arts and Doctor of Laws, and became professor of philosophy. Subsequently he occupied several other stations, was Canon of Hamburg, and chancellor of Holstein-Gottorp. In 1561 or 1564, he died at the former place, as Dean of the Cathedral. Besides several works on philology and jurisprudence, he laboured at a history of Friesland. which death hindered him from completing. Consult *Krafft's* husumsche Kirchen-hist., and *Joechr* allg. Gel. Lex. Th. 4. s. 180.

wonderful skill in theological controversy. We still possess several of Goswin's letters,[1] and have derived from them many of the facts presented in the previous course of the narrative. I shall only farther extract from one of them a passage exhibiting, in a comprehensive view, the *Course of studies* which the youths and men around Wessel at Zwoll, and other celebrated schools were at the time accustomed to pursue, and the authors particularly read and valued by persons of their turn of mind. "Ovid," writes Goswin,[2] "and writers of that description, may be read once. But greater diligence should be given to Virgil, Horace, and Terence, provided that, as a general rule, our profession ought to devote a particular study to the poets. Above all, I would wish you to read the Bible frequently, as by word of mouth I have often told you to do. But as you must not be altogether destitute of historical knowledge, I recommend to you Josephus, the History of the Church (probably Eusebius and his continuators), and, along with it, the *Historia Tripartita*. Of profane historians, the most profitable will be Plutarch, Sallust, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Justin. It will then be well to peruse the writings of Aristotle and Plato, and to dwell somewhat longer upon Cicero, in order to acquire a good Latin style. Next to the Bible, however, the works of Augustine must be thoroughly and earnestly studied; And after him, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Gregory, Bernard, and Hugo de St Victore, who is full of the richest erudition, may follow in their turn." If we here cast a glance upon the *Course* of *studies* which Gerhard *Groot* had, in his day, prescribed to the Brethren of the Common Lot, we cannot but observe with pleasure how, in the course of about a hundred years, and in the same locality, the intellectual horizon has brightened and enlarged. Under Gerhard and his immediate successors, the circle of study was confined to Scripture, the biographies of the saints, and a few devotional works by the ancient fathers or more modern divines.[3] Now, however, no important author, either profane or ecclesi-

[1] These letters are printed in the introduction to the Gröningen edition of the Opp. Wess., which contains notices by Hardenberg and others respecting the life of Wessel, p. 7—10.

[2] In l. c. p. 9.

[3] See Supra pp. 73, 74.

astical, is omitted, and while the Christianity of the Bible still continues the animating centre of the education, a transition has been made from a narrow-minded observance of forms to the recognition of the true worth of knowledge; and a far more comprehensive, liberal, and thorough method of treating it been learned. Nor was the improvement a consequence of the discovery of new theories, but of the great and irresistible progress of life. What happened in this particular circle, happened no less in a great many others, and all the new fountains thus opened contributed their supplies to swell the flood which broke forth in the Reformation.

Let no one suppose we have been trifling in this minute account of Wessel's friends, and of his intercourse with them. Besides the interest connected with the individuals, the matter has a general importance. In every transitionary period, when the preparation for some change and improvement in intellectual life is taking place, the force of an inward exigency originates circles of friends, fellowships, and unions, and these are first smitten with the coming novelty, cherish it enthusiastically in their bosom, and then become the apostles to introduce it on the public stage. Every fundamental improvement in the life of the State proceeds, in the first instance, from the family; and sound education is the only basis upon which good citizenship can be reared. Even so it is in the case of scientific revolutions. Intellectual and literary families must first be formed, in which the rising plant takes root, in order to be afterwards ramified among the people, by schools of science. In a period such as we ourselves have seen, when, about the close of the preceding century, our modern German literature was produced, great intellects, friendships, correspondences, meetings, and societies of men of congenial minds are of indispensable value; and at such a period, those who write but little may exert a much greater weight than the most productive authors at other times. This, for instance, was the case immediately before the Reformation, with *John* of *Dalberg*, *Wilibald Pirkhaimer*,[1] and other enthusiastic patrons of the new tendencies, who, without being

[1] *Dalberg's* position in this respect has been depicted in my Memoria Dalburgii, that of *Pirkhaimer*, chiefly in *Hagen's* work: Deutschlands lit. u. relig. Verhältnisse im Ref.-Zeitalter Th. 1, s. 261 ff.

voluminous writers, became personally enlivening centres of science. The same was also the case with Wessel, when he sojourned at Gröningen, Zwoll, and Adwerd. These were the hearths of a fresh civilisation, and his spirit was the kindling spark.

This *spirit of Wessel* must now be more fully depicted.[1] For that purpose we shall use partly his correspondence with friends, and partly the other writings which he has handed down.

In the character of Wessel our chief admiration is due to a noble, frank, and candid *sense of truth*, which manifests itself, with invigorating and refreshing efficacy, in all he says. In this respect he evinces the same disposition of mind which we reverence in the Reformers, and their genuine successors, and which was nowhere more gloriously evinced than by Luther at the diet of Worms. Stedfast in his attachment to the highest truths, and immoveably rooted in vital Christianity, Wessel was yet always ready to take a lesson from any one, however humble; and far from obstinate bigotry, his mind was in a state of constant activity and progress. He spent his whole life in the pursuit of truth. For her, he travelled into all countries—for her, he searched the Scriptures, and explored the depths of his own heart—for her, he fought, and it was she whom he supplicated from his friends as the best of all boons. "Truth," says Wessel,[2] and he says it in the fulness of his heart, "truth has been the object of my pursuit since the days of childhood, and is more so now than ever, because through truth alone lies the way to life." On the ground of this pure love of truth, which emancipated his mind from all selfishness and obstinacy, Wessel waged his scientific contests. "The conflict for truth," he says,[3] "is of such a kind that, whether as the victorious or the vanquished party, I grow in the liberty of the children of God. For it is a promise of truth that them who abide in her, she will make free. And this is the battle

[1] Compare *Muurling* Orat. de Wesseli Gansfortii Principiis et Virtut. s. 10.

[2] In the treatise de Indulgentiis, addressed to Hoeck, cap. vi., Opp. p. 887.

[3] In the letter to John of Amsterdam, De studio et pietate quaerendae veritatis. Opp. p. 863 sqq.

which the Lord Jesus has commanded us to fight, that we may enter into his kingdom." From the same root grew the delight which he took in solid and pertinent disputations. "I derive quite a peculiar pleasure," he writes,[1] "from the disputations of acute minds, for in these I always either learn or teach, feeling myself under a double obligation, on the one hand, towards the wise, of learning from them, and on the other, towards the teachable instructing of them." And in another letter he says,[2] "The chaplain of Adwerd has promised, that if I will but go and meet him, he will heal me by mere controversy. I therefore implore of you who dwell upon Mount St Agnes, if you desire my cure, to dispute with me, and never to cease, except either as the conquering or the conquered party. Force out the confession of the truth, which clears off all scores." But open as Wessel was to embrace the better view, he never showed himself weakly acquiescent, but always possessed a manly firmness in maintaining the convictions which he had once deliberately formed. His enemies, and occasionally, too, his friends, were more apt to reproach him with stubbornness, and he himself blames the great Gerson[3] for being too ready to yield when his views were contradicted.

Impelled by his zeal for truth, Wessel entered into a correspondence with Doctor *Hoeck* in Naldwick, who as a Nominalist held the same scientific principles as his own, stood high in his estimation, and appears, in general, to have been one of the most eminent theologians of the Netherlands, at the time. Hoeck belonged to a family which produced several eminent divines. He was uncle to that Master Martin Dorp, who was professor of theology at Louvain, and the friend of Erasmus, and must have been known to be intimate with Wessel and a liberal-minded man, as at his death his papers were suspiciously searched, and many in Wessel's handwriting found. In candour and fortitude, however, Wessel is greatly Hoeck's superior, as the correspondence will show. The letter by which it was initiated, is from Wessel, and sufficiently interesting to be here given entire. "Our

[1] The words are in a letter in which he challenges an anonymous correspondent to a disputation upon some points of theology, opp. p. 857.

[2] To John of Amsterdam, Opp. p. 864.

[3] In the treatise de Indulgentiis. Cap. 9. Opp. p. 895.

first interview," he writes,[1] "and at the same time, the good reputation which you enjoy among worthy men, afforded me great satisfaction, and I considered myself fortunate, in having found an upright friend of truth, who has promised in a way so honourable, always to answer my letters. I rejoiced at receiving such a promise, for it seemed to offer me a special place of exercise in addition to my old arena of conflict. Not that mere logomachy has the same charm for me now as in former days, but because, with sounder views, I hope to benefit either myself or my neighbour. You have given me to understand that you have taken offence at some of my doctrines, and been thereby induced to write to Cologne.[2] With that I do not find fault, although I would have considered it more proper, and more consistent with the rule of evangelical righteousness,[3] if you had first come to thy brother, who had trespassed against thee, and told him his fault between thee and him alone, and then, on my refusing to hear thee, had taken with thee two or three persons of character and weight as witnesses, and not proceeded to denounce me until I had first shown persistence in my opposition. Inasmuch, however, as you have not named the person whom you accuse, there is still room for the application of this Gospel rule. My most excellent master, I appeal to your candour and sincerity, so well known to worthy men. I entreat you by the promise which you gave, not only at my request, but also at your own spontaneous suggestion, to write to me again and again if anything I say give you offence. I acknowledge that in many of the assertions I make on various subjects, I am looked upon as singular. I even suspect myself of singularity,[4] and therefore am afraid that I often fall into error. But as the reasons which lead me to my conclusions are derived from faith and the Holy Scriptures, my mind labours[5] with them, and I sometimes blunder them forth in the hope of being refuted and set right by you and others like you, who are

[1] Epistola *M. Wesseli* Gron. ad. M. *Jac. Hoeck*, Theologum de studio et pietate inquirendae veritatis sine pertinacia voluntatis. *Wess.* Opp. p. 864 and 65.

[2] The well-known seat of the Inquisition on the Rhine.

[3] Rectitudinis.

[4] Mihi de singularitate suspectus.

[5] Parturio intra me.

wiser than myself. What that language means you well know; it means to be led to the truth by solid and clear argument. You will, therefore, gain a brother by instructing me concerning my error in so far as I offend. I was never stubborn, even in idle disputations, and how much more would I now have to blush, were I to gainsay the manifest truth. I have travelled about to many universities, and as I sought for controversy, have found many antagonists. Of these some have occasionally taken offence on the point of faith. Never, however, did any of them leave me scandalised; for, after hearing and carefully pondering my arguments, they either assented to them, or at least confessed that they were not unreasonable, and I so satisfied them, that in the end nobody had cause to complain."

To this excellent letter Hoeck, conscious that he was not wholly free from blame, and pained at the writer's ingenuousness, made no reply, so that for a time Wessel felt some doubt and anxiety about its delivery. He opened his mind on the matter to a common friend, Master Engelbert of Leyden,[1] from whom he learned that it had been actually received; And hereupon among other things he remarks, "I scarcely believe that the worthy Hoeck agrees with me on the subject of indulgences. A man of his prudence and reputation has many reasons for not wishing his opinion to be published to the vulgar." In spite of this reserve, Wessel never renounced his love and respect for Hoeck. Though receiving no answer, he repeatedly wrote to him, a proof that he was far from being proud, selfish, or obstinate, and that he only wished to come to a brotherly understanding. At last, after more than four years, an answer came, which, although neither very frank nor satisfactory, he highly valued for the author's sake.[2] Hoeck excuses himself[3] with want of leisure, and speaks on the point of dispute between them in an anxious and equivocal tone. He gives an artificial definition of indulgences, admits that the Bible and the ancient teachers of the church do not even mention them, but appeals to the testimony

[1] *Wess.* Opp. p. 866 and 867.

[2] Wessel says in his letter to Engelbert, "I often take up and peruse the only letter which he ever sent me." Opp. p. 871.

[3] Hoeck's letter is to be found among Wessel's in his Opp. p. 871—876.

of John that Jesus did many things not written in the Gospel, and accordingly, takes his stand upon oral tradition and the authority of the Church. He opposes to Wessel's individual opinion the general belief, the authority of great teachers, particularly Gerson, and the well known words of Augustine, "I would not believe the Gospel if the Church's authority did not oblige me." While Hoeck in this way declares the discrepancy of his opinion from Wessel's, and relinquishes the hope "of ever overcoming by argument, so hard, unconquerable, and intrepid a head as his, which was proof alike against the hammer of the universal faith, and the sword of the authority of the ecclesiastical fathers," he expresses himself respecting his personal qualities in the following characteristic way.[1] "But above all things, most worthy Wessel, I wish you to know, that I have been by no means deceived in you, but from my own experience, and the perusal of your works, have learned that you are a much greater man than, from the report made to me by many, and those very distinguished persons, I expected to have found you. There is but one thing which I must except as unbecoming a really great character. You seem to be obstinate, and in all your statements to strive after a certain singularity, so that it is generally believed you were justly called the Master of Contradiction; and, be assured, even singularity in a man of so great learning, gives offence to many. I must candidly confess that I take my place upon the very opposite side, inasmuch as I am wont never to deviate from the footsteps of the Fathers, except for the weightiest reasons, and rather to defend than assail them. You will recollect that the great Buridanus was likewise of the same opinion, saying, in the introduction to his Ethics, that he had been often betrayed into error by the discoveries of the moderns, but never by the traditions of the ancients."

Wessel replied by a detailed treatise on Indulgences,[2] and dispatched it to Hoeck with an accompanying letter, from which I shall only extract a single passage, as admirably characterizing his generous, liberal, and candid sentiments. "I thank you, most worthy teacher, for your opinion respecting me,

[1] Ibid. p. 871.

[2] Epist. Ven. M. *Wesseli* Gron. responsoria ad M. Jac. Hoeck. Decanum Naeldwick de *Indulgentiis*. *Wess.* Opp. p. 876—912.

which I had long wished to learn. In order, however, to enable you to form a better and clearer judgment, I have resolved, although averse to labour, to answer more fully your much desired letter. Above all, I entreat and adjure you, by the mutual love that binds us together, not to take my peculiarity for pride, or to suppose that, in the sentiments I express, my only wish is to start novelties. Could you look for a moment into my soul and heart, assuredly you would see there, not pride, but humility and contrition, with which I often call upon God in prayer, of his mercy not to suffer me to fall into damnable errors, as the penalty of my obstinacy, whereof I sometimes even suspect myself. Believe me, if I do go astray, it is less from the seduction of passion than from infirmity, for I have the pleasing consciousness within me of having always sought, and of now seeking, the truth of the faith, with such solicitude that even when I believe myself to have found it, *I am always willing* to be set right, not only by men of learning and experience like you, but by *any one, however humble*, yea even by myself, and to confess when I am so."[1]

[1] The genuine frame of a reformer's mind, as we here find it in Wessel, and subsequently in the reformers of the Church in the 16th century, and generally in the great Christian theologians of all centuries, is to stand fast, on the one hand, in the fundamentals of Christian truth, once clearly perceived and sensibly experienced, while ready, on the other, to accept instruction from the humblest individual, when it is deduced from Scripture and clear substantial arguments. Such were Luther's sentiments when he spoke at Worms; and we have a noble pattern of the same in the royal confessor *Frederick III.* of the Palatinate, at the diet of Augsburg in 1566, where, on being strongly attacked on the subject of the Catechism which he had introduced, he frankly declared that he was ready to defend it against all objections, but at the same time subjoined the noble offer, which only the sincerest love of truth could have inspired: "If any one, be he young or old, learned or unlearned, friend or foe, yea the meanest kitchen or stable-boy, will, out of God's word, which alone can save, even the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, instruct or inform me better than I have as yet been taught, I will not only thank him, next to Almighty God, but besides, I will yield due obedience to God and his holy word," which declaration made so deep an impression upon the princes, that Augustus, Elector of Saxony, patting him on the shoulder, said "Fred, thou art the most pious of us all:" and the Margrave of Baden after the meeting, asked the bystanders, "Why trouble this prince? he is more pious than any of us." *Struvens* Pfalz. K. Gesch, Cap 5.

In this manner, Wessel on every hand sought the truth in love. Nor did he less seek *love in the truth*, as its only sure and *vital basis*. To him knowledge without love was a sounding brass, and love without knowledge, even though well-intentioned, a gloomy and turbid zeal. In his view, only the two combined constitute the true and full content of life, and only do so when they are actuated by the Divine spirit, and find in God their origin and their end. "Jesus," he says,[1] "desires to see in man the Divine image restored by himself, or in other words, *truth*, *purity*, and *love*. In so far as these do not live within us, there is night in our bosoms." According to him, knowledge must be rooted in life and in love; while love should evidence and refine itself in the light of truth. This reference to life and man's highest interests, he always took into account in forming his estimate of any kind of learning and mental accomplishment; nor did it escape his observation, that science was indispensable, inasmuch as not merely antiquity, but even the records of Christianity, would speedily become lifeless and dumb without constantly renewed research.[2] But just as much did knowledge seem to him dead and fruitless without that higher spirit. In a word,

§. 44, s. 189, 190. Wessel expresses himself in many passages in the self-same spirit. I will only add to those already quoted the following de Purgat. p. 845: Haec sic dixerim pro meo captu interim; quia mihi verba Sacri Codicis ita urgere videntur, *paratus acquiescere cuicunque clariorem et congruentiorem verbis sententiam afferenti.*

[1] Scal. Medit. iii., p. 338.

[2] That Wessel did not depreciate learning and knowledge, but set them in their right place,—that here too he had found the golden mean between the fanaticism which despises, and the enlightenment which overvalues it, is evident from his whole life and actions. We may however, quote a few statements, which distinctly declare that he looked upon learning and scientific education in general as a necessary constituent in the higher life. Scal. Medit. Exempl. I. p. 333, he says: Literae si dormiant, quid mihi Augustinus? Immo, quid mihi Paulus, et Evangelium? Et attenta consideratio si dormiat, quid mihi literae? Mihi siquidem perinde sunt, quasi non sint. Ibid. Exempl. ii. p. 370: Tolle literas, et quis mihi fructus ex foecundo illo Augustino? quantolibet ingenio, quantolibet flumine manasset in diebus suis, postero tamen seculo marcidus et obscurus jaceret. Immo ex Paulo, ex Evangelio, quis mihi fructus, ubi literale exercitium penitus resecueris? Universa igitur haec puerilibus meditationum initiis paulatim talia tanta incrementa sumserunt, ut horrori et admirationi fiant attendenti.

what he desired was not *knowledge* but *wisdom*, and that the wisdom whose beginning is the fear of the Lord. This is admirably expressed in the following passage. "Knowledge is not the highest end, for he who only knows for the sake of knowing is a fool, having no relish for the fruit of knowledge, and likewise no ability wisely to manage what he does know. The cognisance of truth bears within it an excellent fruit, if it be but wisely cultivated; for by it the man who knows, is enabled to draw near to, God, and so to become his friend; and if by knowing he adheres to Him, he will gradually advance so as to taste how gracious the Lord is, and by tasting will desire, until his desires become a flame, in the glow of which he will love, and become one spirit with Him. This is the true, pure, and genuine fruit of genuine science, which, in truth, all men by nature desire to possess far more than mere reminiscence or knowledge in and of themselves. For as fluctuating opinion is vain without knowledge, so is knowledge unfruitful without love. Nay, love is the fountain from which all our efforts for opinion and knowledge flow. For we see and are persuaded, that nothing is so much loved by men as blessedness. We know besides that nothing is so worthy of being loved as love; and, finally, we know that nothing ought to be so much loved as God. If these three propositions are true—and they are perfectly true, and all truths harmonize—it necessarily follows that our God is for us the beatific love, and the object after which we naturally strive and long, seeing that he is the end and aim of our perfection, and the true and sole fruit of education; so that the man who does not attain to it, cultivates his mind amiss, as he who remembers only for the sake of remembering, is a fool. . . . . God being in this way recognized as the chief end of life, it follows that all who choose anything else as their fruit and end, despite the milder opinions men may form of them, are idolaters. For they who know, merely for knowing's sake (even supposing God to be the object of their knowledge), exalt knowledge above God. Otherwise they would set God above knowledge, and glorify him supremely. Another class, who only know in order that others may know of them, labour under a still more shameful folly, inasmuch as they make a God of the opinions of their fellow-men; and that doubtless is a very changeable and faithless God for their

folly to contrive. Nor are these far from a class who occupy a still lower rank, I mean persons who desire to know in order to be looked upon as great. The fourth and last degree consists of those whose only wish is to appear as knowing. They are the companions of him who rules over all the sons of pride, cares for nothing but himself, and dwells in empty solitude."[1]

Wessel was also aware, that as, in general, all knowledge which is vital penetrates into the nature of its object, so, in particular, must true knowledge of divine things, rest upon the foundation of love, and that the invisible kingdom exists only for him who enters it in the exercise of faith, hope, and affection; whereas it has no existence for the merely sensuous man. The elevation of the mind to heaven requires the acquisition of a peculiar sense, without which the celestial world remains for ever closed, as it can be apprehended only by pure and delicate organs. "It is as if you were to consult a swineherd about the splendour of a court, or as if, respecting the songs of nightingales and larks, you were to ask and receive the judgment of the frogs of the marsh, who know and love no other melody but their own croak. However high the eagle, with its free wing and bright eye, may soar towards heaven, the night-ravens[2] and bats think it no particular praise. In like manner, in sensual men who only sow for the flesh, all the senses of the true, that is the inner man, are dead. They do not feel or perceive the things that are of God, and the consequence is, that they judge of the true blessings as if they did not exist, according to a propensity innate in all to regard as non-existent that which is only non-apparent."[3] Wessel could scarcely fail to be conscious, that his sense for divine things was more open and expanded than common. At the same time he was very far from self-exultation and spiritual pride, and speaks with great modesty of the measure of his religious advancement.[4]

This is also the place to notice some of his expressions respecting the *Study of Logic*. As a really scientific man, and a Nominalist who laid great stress upon precision of thought and expression, he could not but ascribe a high worth to logic. He re-

[1] See de Sacramento Poenit. Opp. p. 783 sq.
[2] Nycticoraces.
[3] Scal. Medit. iv. 3. p. 283.
[4] Ibid. Exempl. ii. p. 384. and Exempl. i. 361 and 362.

commended the study of it to every theologian, and blames Gerson for depreciating it as a science.[1] "Who," he says, "could ever have reached that eminence in theology which Peter d'Ailly attained, without being skilled in the definition of ideas, divisions, demonstrations, distinctions, and logical instances? I am speaking of controversies, where great strictness in handling the subject is requisite, not of discourses to the people or contemplations before God. . . . . We must, therefore, unquestionably apply logic to theological subjects. And how could Gerson himself have become the great theologian he was, except by the help of the rigid logic of his master Peter d' Ailly?" But while Wessel thus required the utmost precision of ideas in the sphere of science, he was aware that no perfection of mere form was enough in itself, and that, especially for religious life, purity, fulness, and depth of sentiment are no less essential. Here accordingly, and especially among persons not conversant with theology, he disapproved of improperly mixing up learning and a smattering of science. To this effect he expresses himself with singular beauty in his letter to the nun of Clearwater, Gertrude Reyners,[2] who must have had a somewhat unfeminine taste for philosophy. "Respecting the study of logic," he writes, "I do not deny that it serves as a good exercise for school; but neither do I see of what use it can be in the solitude of the monastry, or for the consolation of a mind raised above the world, and especially for females like you. It is the natural endowment of your whole sex rather to glow with affection than to be distinguished by powers of thought and judgment. I, therefore, believe that your best logic lies in prayer, for the promise is not vain, 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Long before learning that science, you will have obtained from the Master of truth, by means of believing prayer, those communications of truth that are suited to your wants. It is not good for the simple dove-like eye to let itself be perplexed by a variety of objects. They are slowest in reaching the goal who too curiously contemplate the objects that surround the way. By prayer, acquire for yourself love, and by it you will have gained all the fruit of logic, which is knowledge and truth. "No one lives," such are the noble words

[1] De Indulgentiis cap. ix. Opp. p. 895.

[2] *Wess.* Opp. p. 915—917.

which conclude the letter, "No one lives who does not love;[1] for lukewarm indifference is like a sleep of death. He only wholly lives who wholly loves, and he only is blessed who, possessed of the object of his passion, loves in a worthy manner."

Of Wessel's intrepid and yet pious independence of mind, we have already frequently spoken. It still remains, however, to direct attention to what was also an emanation from the same source of a free and profound faith, viz., his *opposition to several of the forms of superstition* prevalent at the time. The rejection of magic[2] is not singular in a man who had been trained in the institutions of the Brethren of the Common Lot; but he likewise expresses himself with great judgment on the subject of *visions*, *revelations*, and *apparitions*; and, by his moderation in that respect, distinguishes himself characteristically from Thomas à Kempis and the earlier members of the Society, in the sphere of whose thoughts and life these occupied no inconsiderable place. Among the pious ladies with whom he associated, a belief in such things might easily gain entrance. Wessel, however, was by no means disposed to tolerate it; and he writes as follows to Gertrude Reyners:[3] "You ask my opinion about the ghost of which there is now so much talk among the people. Serious men can hardly entertain the assertions they hear on that subject, and much is written and said upon it which is alien to the gospel and Holy Scripture. Now, were even an angel to come from heaven, and proclaim anything contrary to what is there distinctly taught, we ought not to receive it." After alluding to the instance of a professor at Paris, who was said to have returned from the other world, he proceeds: "Seeing then that for the most part such revelations and visions are neither reported nor judged of with much discretion, I, for my part, consider them dangerous and deceptive. . . . . In general, susceptible and curious ears are more affected by novelties of the sort, than by

[1] Nemo convivit, qui non vivit. Nemo vivit, nisi qui digne amat. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 82, p. 627. Scala Medit. Exempl. II. p. 379. Mortuus aut amarus omnis homo, qui nihil diligit. Omnis autem vita, ut vita sit, a dilectione oportet ut vivificetur. Indigna vero dilectio indecora. Quae autem dignior, quam qua Dei mei, domini mei, legislatoris mei dilectionem quaero? Quisquis enim diligit, dulciter operatur.

[2] Scal. Medit. i. 10, p. 207.

[3] *Wess.* Opp. p. 915.

evangelical truth. They excite rather to indolent strolling and talking than to profitable works. I do not therefore reject pious revelations and visions when they are consonant to the truth and conducive to piety, though they must never be made a hinge or anchor of the faith, but, like other writings not included in the canon of Scripture, only read for edification. In most instances, however, we should not fail to see in them the wiles of Satan, who changes himself into an angel of light."

The idea of a direct influence of the world of spirits upon us, or of our actions upon it, appeared to Wessel dangerous, and for this and other reasons which are involved in his whole manner of thinking upon theology, he disapproved of *masses for the dead*, and did not wish that at his own decease any should be offered for him. He did not indeed reject prayer for the departed, as absolutely wrong;[1] and rather believed that this bond of sympathy should intwine in the presence of God all spirits that are related to Him, whether human or angelic, exalted to glory or still militant upon earth; but at the same time he thought that every prayer of the kind should be conceived in a spirit of perfect submission to the Divine decrees, and seek as its object that God would shed the celestial light of truth upon all, that so they may find entrance into his kingdom. On this subject he writes to Bernard of Meppen:[2] "When I depart out of this life I have no will for myself different from God's. But his will will be that I shall pass out of this faintly dawning day into the light of the rising sun. For this it is my duty to pray, and it is for this that the angels pray in behalf of the departed. Yes, and we likewise pray for the angels, when we pray that their holy wishes respecting us may be fulfilled. For this, too, the whole Church prays, or, at least, ought to pray."[3]

[1] For example he says, de Orat. vii. 12, p. 139. "It is a holy and beneficial employment of the mind to pray for those who have fallen asleep, that they may be freed from their sins; as it is holy and beneficial to desire what God desires, and to pray that they may become what it is God's will that they shall become."

[2] Epistola M. *Wessel* ad F. *Bernhardum* Meppensem, Canonicum Regul. de profectu et statu animarum post hanc vitam: quid et quomodo pro eis orandum? Opp. p. 855—857.

[3] The friend to whom Wessel wrote, had probably understood him to

The same determined repudiation of superstitious opinions and practices, unmeaning ceremonies, and hypocritical observances, is to be found on other occasions in Wessel's life. Several anecdotes of the kind have been preserved, which, as proceeding from contemporaries and admirers, and perfectly according with his style of sentiment, we do not hesitate to embrace. Being once present in a Cistercian monastery, when a work filled with the most absurd fables, the Dialogues of Caesarius, was read aloud at the dinner table, he smiled in his own pleasant way to himself; and on being asked the cause, "I am laughing," he said, "at these gross lies. It would be far better to read aloud to the brethren, the Holy Scriptures or Bernhard's devotional works; for such productions as that we now hear, besides their absurdities, contain much that is dangerous." With the same displeasure he rejected the work, On the eminent men of the Cistercian order, and with still more, the notorious, and, in a degree, truly blasphemous work, On the conformities of St Francis.[1] Pious as he truly was, he was just as averse to *formality* and *methodism* in *piety*. All ought to be free and from a vital source. He never used a prayer-book or rosary. For this reason the brethren on Mount St Agnes, who were strict in their adherence to ecclesiastical customs, once asked him, "If he never prayed at all?" To which he replied: "With the help of God I make it my endeavour to be always praying. Nevertheless I daily repeat the Lord's prayer. That, however, is a prayer so pure and so sublime, that it would suffice were I but to say it once a year."[2] Wessel has written a trea-

mean, that he condemned not merely the ecclesiastical abuses of prayer for the dead, but the act itself as devoid of intrinsic truth. This led a third friend, *John of Amsterdam*, to correct the misunderstanding into which Bernard had fallen. He did so in a letter (*Wesseli* Opp. p. 917—920), from which we shall cite only the conclusion: "I therefore believe that my conviction rests upon good grounds, and that what *Wessel* really said was, that he wished no other prayers to be made for him, save that he might be enlightened by the Sun of righteousness, for that without the beams of the true light, no repose, of whatever kind it might be, could have any worth for him."

[1] *Hardenberg* relates both facts in his narrative of the life of Wessel, p. 17, 18.

[2] This is told by Gerhard *Geldenhauer* in his short Vit. Wesseli. See *Wessel's* Opp. p. 23. At the end of the notices of his life prefixed to his Opera, p. 26, it is also said, ex antiquo quodam Codice descriptum:

tise of his own upon *prayer*, which contains also a copious exposition of the Lord's prayer. We there see how spiritual and sublime was the conception he had formed of the duty in general, and how well he understood the depth and riches of that noblest of all forms of supplication ;[1] and it was its inexhaustible riches, including a whole world of thought, and its peculiar efficacy, which alone he meant to express, when he said that it was sufficient for a whole year. Here also he expresses similar sentiments respecting the lifeless repetition of prayers, and all mere mechanism in this freest of all exercises of the spirit. He combats those who recommend as the best armour for piety, many prayers, long litanies, and plenty of rosaries and psalms. "For," he says,[2] "although these things must not be altogether abolished, for the sake of those who are too enslaved to sense to understand anything else, and must therefore be tolerated, still they certainly hinder a man's progress who incite him to spend his time in multiplying words, and think they will be heard for their much speaking." But however decidedly Wessel rejected everything mechanical in devotion, he was yet even here not averse to a certain order and custom, provided it possessed inward life and truth. He himself was accustomed always, upon the day on which he partook of the Lord's supper, to read aloud[3] to the Brethren from the Gospel of John, the valedictory prayer of Jesus, and deliver a suitable discourse upon it.

We have thus delineated the leading features in Wessel's views. We must not, however, omit to notice what constituted

Wesselus cum multorum *βαττολογίαν* in recitandis precibus consideraret, dixit: Hi homines una hora plurimas orationes dominicas recitare possunt; ego vero toto anno vix unam. Haec Regnerus Praedinius.

[1] The infinite riches of thought and depth of religious feeling in the Lord's prayer are frequently extolled and displayed by Wessel in this work. I shall cite only one passage from the short introduction: "This prayer possesses, I know not what secret efficacy above all other prayers, and promises to him who carefully uses it, a great fulness of devotion. For a fertile soil, beneath the sun of spring and summer, yields not so abundant fruit as this prayer of Christ in the mouth of a glowing suppliant. It calls, however, for an attentive and diligent cultivator."

[2] De orat. i. 8, p. 15.

[3] *Hardenberg's* notices of Wessel s. 18.

their centre and point of unity, and was the source both of his opposition to all falsehood and of his practice of all good things. This was ardent love to God and man, or, in other words, *piety*. Here lay the germ of all his sentiments and theological opinions. In Wessel's eyes the love of God and Christ to man is the chief content and proper power of the gospel; and in the same way, upon the other hand, the love of man to God which God's love kindles and feeds, seems to him the summit and perfection of the spiritual life, the way to truth, the foundation of all good, the source of purity, and the standard of justification and blessedness. Like Thomas à Kempis, he sees in *love* the confluence of all that is great and glorious in Christianity. It unites divinity and humanity; it produces peace; it accomplishes the divine will not as a legal work but with heavenly freedom;[1] it lends to this present life all its worth and weight, and at the same time, like faith, from which it is inseparable, is a germ of life eternal, unfolding itself more and more fully and beautifully for ever and ever.

The piety of Wessel, however, evinces itself most of all as a vital consciousness of dependence upon God, and complete devotedness to his will. All good which he either is or has, he derives from God, and into God's arms he casts himself wholly and without reserve. "All I have," he says, addressing the Divine Being,[2] "is from thee. Not by my own wisdom, or my own device, or my own labour, am I what I am; but I am this and all else, because such has been thy will. Thou hast commanded and I am here; and for this reason, I do not merely commit myself to thee with confidence, or devote myself to thee in faith, but, as is my duty, I give myself wholly up to thy will. Use me according to thy free pleasure. Created for thy sake, and by thyself, out of no-

[1] The substance of his views is comprised in the following admirable passage from one of Wessel's letters: "There is no life but in love, and no holy life but in holy love. We must hence love the first-born of the brethren, and by him be brought back to the Father of love. For unless with pure hearts we love him, we cannot see his face. . . . . *Love* waits for no command, for he does not love at all who waits until he receives, and only acts after he has received an order. It would have been far more difficult for the Magdalene to remain inactive than to act, more difficult not to follow the Lord and not to suffer, than to take up her cross and be crucified with him." *Wess.* Opp. p. 861.

[2] Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 364.

thing, I ought to seek and to expect nothing but thy glory. Then, whatever befalls me, provided it comes from thee, will be right. . . . . Let this one thing suffice for my comfort, to know that such is the will of Him, without whose will not even a leaf drops from a tree; and in all situations, let it be the firm anchor of my tossing bark, to have no other will but thine." And not less does the piety of Wessel manifest itself as sincere and profound humility. Thoroughly as his whole mind was imbued with ardent love to the Divine Being, he yet always possessed that child-like modesty which considers its affection as far beneath the dignity of its object,[1] and a consciousness that all he had to offer to God bore no proportion to what he had received from Him, "What shall I render to Him for his gifts," he asks,[2] "to whom I can render nothing which is not already his own,

[1] His humility is often expressed in a most pathetic manner. For example, he says, De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 65, p. 588: "O that the love which now, in my undisturbed position, I feel towards the Lord Jesus, were but as great as that of Peter even at the moment when he was denying him with curses! Then would I believe that I indeed live in Christ, and that I live more fully than now I do." Wessel is fond of holding up the Magdalene as a pattern of love to God and Christ, the truest, warmest, and best fitted to purify and exalt the character. One of these representations (de Magnit. Pass. Cap. 85, 86, p. 632 and 33) he concludes with the words: "Would you then have a short and safe, a sure and good and easy path, by which to pass from want to plenty, from the tempest to the calm, from apprehension to security? Follow the footsteps of the Magdalene. Think not her example troublesome, nor your imitation hard. It is not necessary to cross seas, to climb Alps, or scramble by steep and impracticable paths over rocks. What you have to imitate is beside you, in your heart, within your very self. In order to see it, you need but open your eyes. For who is there so unacquainted with human things as not to be aware what blessedness is involved in the life of a fortunate lover. With consenting voice it is attested by both the wise and foolish." In the same work, p. 631, he says of the Magdalene: Jesus illi vivens vita, moriens ei mors erat, resurgens illi vita aeterna fuit. With this let the reader compare Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 355. Wessel also points to the Indian women who follow their husbands at death, as patterns of exalted love and faithfulness, and wishes that he could only show the same power of affection in divine things, as theirs in their relation to man. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 354. This modesty Wessel extended also to his knowledge, of whose imperfection he was always conscious, and that at the best it was but a gift of heaven.

[2] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 405. Compare Exempl. i. p. 349.

nothing which I have not obtained from him, and obtained as a boon? Woe's me! I must not be ungrateful, and yet to give him gift for gift in the least degree is impossible. My very self and all that is mine is thine, O Lord, whether I choose or not. I received it without desert, and I posssss it without the power of making any return for it. And yet it would be to profane the holy, were I to possess it without gratitude. But how can I be grateful? With immeasurable obligations upon the one hand, and total penury upon the other, all that is left for me is to acknowledge and confess, and refer all to Him, to admire, love, glorify Him, and sweetly enjoy his bounties." And in another beautiful passage:[1] "What can I give to Him who gives all to me? The violet of spring exhales its fragrance to the fostering sun. The winged gnat sports in its beams. But to Him who is my spiritual sun, what can I give in return? In truth, to render to Him anything of my own is impossible, and, towards such a lover, would be dreadful ingratitude and neglect of duty. . . . The only thing which I can give is a grateful heart. So then, O God, I am thine, and all that is within me only exists because Thou hast willed it so."

We return to the course of Wessel's life, but now only for the purpose of terminating the account of it. He prosecuted to the end of his days the quiet and profitable industry which we have thus far been delineating, lived to a considerable age, and contrived, by self-denial and moderation, and in spite of his rather feeble frame of body and great intellectual exertions and conflicts, to preserve such a measure of strength and vigour as enabled him, without interruption, to devote himself to the delights of study, and to the training of the rising generation.[2] The force and peculiarity of his mind evinces

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 383.

[2] His senses may, towards the end of his life, have lost somewhat of their acuteness. *Hardenberg*, after relating that he was accustomed upon the day when he took the Lord's Supper, to read aloud to the brethren the farewell prayer of Jesus, subjoins, p. 18, the observation: Sed cum senex esset, et alioqui male videret, aberrabat frequenter a textu, ut a monachis rideretur. On the contrary, *Gelden-*

itself in the fact that at the close of his life, he still pondered upon theological subjects, and even became a prey to doubts which he had never before known. To a friend who visited him in his last illness, he is reported to have said,[1] that according to his time of life and condition, he was well, but had great trouble in one way, for that he was tossed to and fro by conflicting thoughts, and began to doubt of the truth of the Christian religion. Even at former periods, indeed, he had not been exempt from inward conflicts and scruples.[2] Hitherto, how-

hauer informs us, p. 13, that he preserved his sight and hearing entire to the latest period of his life, never used spectacles, could read the most diminutive hand-writing, and write a good hand himself. These accounts are considered by *Muurling*, p. 86, contradictory. They may both, however, be true in a certain measure. Wessel was all his life somewhat short-sighted; but his power of vision was durable, and he was able, even in extreme old age, to read and write with the naked eye. The short-sighted are the best readers of writing in small characters, and that is the style in which they usually write. Consonant to this is the notice which Pet. Pappus von *Tratzberg* appends at the end of Wessel's long letter to Hoeck, on the subject of Indulgences, in the Groeningen Edition of his works p. 912. He says that Wessel wrote that treatise, which belongs to the later years of his life, with his own hand, and in characters so diminutive as to be scarcely legible. The manuscript was preserved as a precious treasure in the library of the Groeningen Burgomaster, Joachim *Alting*.

[1] The account is given by *Geldenhauer* in the notices from the life of Wessel, p. 23, and in the Effig. et Vit. p. 24. The same thing has occurred in the life of other distinguished individuals. Even the pious *Tauler's* death was full of conflict, or as his old biographer, at chap. xiv., expresses it, was "very sore, for evil spirits assailed him with agility and cunning, so that he was in constant anxiety, lest he should fall into despair." Besides him, I also recollect at this moment a very distinguished lady. About the middle of the 16th century there lived at Heidelberg, as the wife of Andrew Gründler, professor of medicine, the Italian lady so celebrated for her learning, *Olympia Fulvia Morata*. According to the report of her husband, she, too, attained to a calm assurance through a long passage of doubts: Interrogata fuit eodem tempore a quodam viro bono: an esset in ejus animo scrupulus aliquis, qui eam male haberet? At illa, totis, inquit, antehac septem annis nunquam cessavit Diabolus omnibus modis conari, ut me de fide vera detruderet: nunc vero, ac si omnia sua tela amisisset, nusquam apparet, nec ego in animo meo quicquam aliud sentio quam summam tranquillitatem et pacem Christi. Melch. *Adami* Vitae Germ. Philos. p. 166.

[2] He speaks, for example, in a very graphic manner of the bellum intestinum, ubi notio cum judicio velut epar contra praecordia pugnat,

ever, the inborn scepticism of his nature had been chiefly directed against ecclesiastical dogmas and popular notions. Now, it seems to have suddenly collected its whole remaining might, and risen up against the very central point of the faith. But that which was the inmost and highest power of his life soon obtained the victory in the breast of Wessel. Many a time before, in the exercise of a lively faith in the Redeemer, he had obtained inspiring glimpses into the eternal world, and long had he anticipated and extolled the happy day, on which he would pass to an infinitely perfect life of love;[1] and now when the hour of his departure approached, he met it with steadfastness and joy. To the friend, when he repeated his visit, he said, "Thank God, all the vain thoughts of which I spoke have vanished, and now *I know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.*"

Certain it is that, considering the steadfastness of his faith, which rested solely upon the love of God in Christ, Wessel could not depart otherwise than in this state of mind. A peaceful death at

and says: hujus miserrimae calamitatis in me praeludia quaedam experior, quando tantam lucem videns non lucem delectabiliter amplector. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 351.

[1] Wessel abundantly expressed in his works his hopes of a future life. I will here recall only a single passage in which, with peculiar elevation, he points how the emancipated soul, beholding truth in the light of God, will become one spirit with him, and, in this close union, be exalted to a life of the highest and purest love, yea even to full conformity to his image. "O that will be a happy day," he says, "when I shall not only feel attachment, but when I shall love, and not merely love, but love with all my heart, and soul, and spirit! Nor will it even suffice that I truly, and sincerely, and purely love, but the nerve and force of my affection will be unspeakably heightened by Him who was born and who gave himself for me. So that my love will then be exalted as far above that which we now feel, as heaven is above the earth, the sun above a spark, and the universe greater than a grain of mustard seed. And with a love thus elevated and inflamed will I keenly and fervently long and hunger and thirst after my God, and when at last my desires shall be crowned, and I possess and embrace their object, who will then paint my bliss? Who can comprehend it that has not burned with the same ardour? Blessed, therefore, yea truly blessed that day! Its blesedness is such as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. So also no heart can comprehend the magnitude of the love which is commensurate with and alone answerable to such a felicity." Scal. Meditat Exempl. iii. p. 406.

length emancipated his spirit on the 4th day of October 1489,[1] and consequently, supposing him to have been born in 1419 or 1420, at the age of sixty-nine or seventy. He was buried in the nunnery at Groeningen,[2] where the last stage of his life was chiefly spent, in the choir of the chapel, and not far from the principal altar.[3] The highest ecclesiastical honour was thus adjudged to him. In the register of the church his decease was recorded in the following words: "In the year of the Lord 1489, died the venerable Master Wessel Hermanni, an admirable teacher of sacred theology, well versed in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew tongues, and acquainted with philosophy in all its branches."[4]

Till the end of the 16th century, the grave of Wessel was without any particular mark, and scarcely distinguishable as the resting-place of so eminent a man.[5] The inhabitantsof Groeningen, however, would no longer permit the remains of a fellow-citizen, of whom they had such just reason to be proud, to repose unhonoured among them. Accordingly in 1637, the Town Council decreed that a monument should be erected to his memory, upon which the epitaph composed shortly after his death by his friend Paulus Palantinus, was engraved.[6] As in the

1 Regn. Praedin. Opp. p. 198. See above p. 289, note 1.

2 Sepultus est apud Virgines Spirituales, vulgo "ten Geestlichen Maegden" in medio chori. *Hardenb.* p. 22, The convent in which Wessel died is now an Orphan-hospital called the Town—or the Red-Orphan hospital. See *Hofstede de Groot* Gesch. der Broederenkerk te Gron. p. 14.

3 Compare *Hardenberg* ibid. *Geldenhauer* s. 23. Effig. et Vit. p. 24.

4 . . . et in tota philosophia quasi universalis. Suffrid. *Petri* de Script. Fris. Dec. viii. cap. 4.

5 Compare Ubb. *Emmii* Hist. Fris. ed. 1616. p. 457. and *Ypei* Leerrede ter gedachtnis van de verdiensten etc. p. 63.

6 It is given by *Hardenberg* and runs:

Pallida Wesseli saxum hoc tegit ossa magistri,
Philosophos inter qui leo fortis erat.
Illum lingua triplex, Hebraea, Pelasga, Latina
Inclyta doctorum scandere pulpta dedit.
Agrippina et Parisium, duo regna Minervae,
Sensere ingenii vimque decusque sui.
At laus una viro, quia totum scibile scivit,
Et vitio infectis malleus ipse fuit.
Arx Phrisiae cineres, Germania tollit honores.
Dic, ferat omnipotens, lector amande, animam.

course of a hundred years, however, the inscription had become almost illegible, a larger and more magnificent monument[1] was, in 1730 or 1740, erected upon the wall of the choir. The grave itself was marked by a four-cornered stone of moderate size and dark colour, on which are the words:[2]

IOANNIS. WESSELI
GANSFORTII
TUMULUS.

The characteristics of Wessel have, as I hope, been sufficiently

[1] The inscription upon this monument is not quite in keeping with Wessel's simplicity of mind, and is as follows:

ACCIPE. POSTERATAS. QUOD. PER. TUA. SECULA. NARRES.
IOHANNES WESSELUS. GANSFORTIUS.
VULGO
LUX. MUNDI. DICTUS.
VIR
ERUDITIONE. ET. PIETATE. INSIGNIS.
LINGUAE. DIVINAE. RESTAURATOR. PRIMUS.
PHILOSOPHUS. MEDICUS. IURISPERITUS. POLYHISTOR
THEOLOGUS. SUMMUS.
NATUS
GROENINGAE. CIRCA. ANNUM. MCCCC
DENATUS.
GROENINGAE. QUARTO. NONARUM. OCTOBRIS. MCCCCXC
NOVISSIMA. MORIENTIS. VOX
NIL. EGO. SCIO. PRAETER. CHRISTUM
ET. EUM. CRUCIFIXUM.
IN. MEMORIAM.
CIVIS. IMMORTALITATE. DIGNISSIMI.
INFRA. SEPULTI
MONUMENTUM. HOC
ERECTUM.

[2] Information on these points is furnished by *Muurling* in the Commentat. de Wess. p. 90—94, and in several works to which Muurling refers, viz., *Ypei* Leerrede ter gedachtnis van de verdiensten der nederl. Vaderen etc. p. 61—63, and Tegenwoordige staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden. 1793. Tom. xxi. p. 92, 93.

indicated in the preceding narrative. Here we shall only subjoin a few remaining traits. His external appearance, especially in consequence of his lame foot, may not have been dignified, but it was highly expressive. There are several pictures of him. The one now before me,[1] although defective in execution, perfectly represents his mind and character. It is a bold, plain, and open countenance. The features are coarse, but not without a fine intellectual expression. There is seriousness upon the brow, intelligence in the eyes, and a degree of roguery about the mouth.[2] He is without beard, and the hair of the head is not seen, for he wears a cap, which like the rest of his dress is of the utmost simplicity, and entirely corresponds with the plain and citizen-like character of the face. That Wessel's appearance, manners, and address, produced a very decided impression, is evident from the powerful influence he exerted upon persons of all descriptions, friends and pupils, the great and the humble, men, women, and youths, and is corroborated by the following anecdote.[3] Dining on one occasion at the monastery Adwerd, he met at the table of the abbot, Henry Rees, an eminent professor from Paris,[4] who was desirous to hear so celebrated a man

[1] In Effig. et Vit. Profess. Gron. p. 12. Other likenesses occur in *Schotani* Gesch. v. Friesland. p. 379. *Gerdes* Hist. Evang. Renov. T. i. p. 43. Levensbeschrijving van beroemde en geleerde mannen, vierde stuck, nro. VI. Principum et illustrium quorundam virorum imagines edid. P. *van der Aa.* There is also a draught of him, but of small size and inconsiderable value, beside his tomb at Groeningen. See *Muurling* p. 90.

[2] A contemporary says of him what is very characteristic :—

Jam gravitas in fronte videri, et risus in ore.

[3] It is related by *Hardenberg* p. 17, who appeals to Andrew Munter, *Philosophus Stoicus Adwerdiae.*

[4] *Hardenberg* does not inform us particularly who this professor was. He says of him: Nomen non certo teneo; puto tamen *Martinum* fuisse appellatum. There were of course many learned men with the Christian name of Martin at the University of Paris in the course of the 15th century. A list of them is given by *Bulæus* in the Hist. Univers. Paris. T. v. p. 905—907. Among the many named we might fix on either of two, viz., *Martin Delf*, member of the German nation, in 1479 Rector of the University, afterwards Doctor of theology, and author of a work, De arte oratoria, greatly celebrated by contemporaries; and

discourse upon a variety of subjects. To the questions addressed to him by this stranger he returned very meagre answers. After dinner, however, he invited him to a quiet conversation, in which he explained to him the most difficult points, with such acuteness and force of demonstration, that the Parisian sprang from the table, took off his doctor's bonnet, knelt before him, and exclaimed with astonishment: "Either you are a second Alanus, or an angel from heaven, or another Being whom I dare not name. God be praised! my hopes are not deceived. It is not in vain that I have come to see you, nor in vain that the doctors of the Sorbonne admired and hated the Master of contradiction." The deportment of Wessel was open, noble, and independent. In early life he was rather tart and somewhat given to sarcasm, but in later years became more kind and gentle. At his outset in life, he took delight in a roving industry, directed towards outward objects; but in the evening of his days retired within himself, and confined his activity to a more tranquil sphere. A leading feature in his character was aptitude for tuition. He had a strong taste and singular talent for clearly explaining a subject, and giving the mind an interest in it. He also delighted in disputation, in which his proficiency in logic and dialectics, generally secured to him the victory. Never tired himself of speaking and arguing, far less did he tire

Martinus Magistri, procurator of the French nation, also Rector of the University in 1460, one of the most eminent theological professors of his day, a zealous champion of Nominalism, for which he also exerted his influence as almoner to Louis XI. (See above, p. 307.) Were I to choose betwixt these two, I would fix upon the former; for Martin Magistri probably knew Wessel intimately at Paris, and would consequently not have been so eager to be acquainted with him. The Codex Monacensis, which contains Hardenberg's biographical notices has here, fol. 13, the words: Nisi fortasse fuit *Nicolaus Clamengis*, cujus lucubrationes extant, nam is mirabiliter ad Wesselum affectus fuisse dignoscitur. This, however, is a manifest blunder, for *Nicolaus de Clamenge*, who in 1393 was Rector of the University of Paris, and probably died before the year 1440, could scarcely even have known Wessel when a young man at Paris, and not possibly have seen him after attaining his celebrity at Adwerd. Of congenial mind the two certainly were, but the chronology makes it improbable that they were personally known to each other.

his hearers.[1] Besides, he had at his command the gift of wit, of that rarer sort which is called dry. While seriousness sat enthroned on his forehead, a smile played around his lips, and diffused mirth and cheerfulness. He thus united every quality which could make him a distinguished teacher and educator of youth.

A full appreciation of Wessel requires that we shall take into consideration the age in which he lived. His lot was cast in a transitionary and intermediate period, and by that we must judge of his position. His life, as it were, fills up the interval between Gerson and Luther, between the great French theologians who negotiated with the papacy and attempted a reform on the ground of the hierarchical institution, and the still greater theologians of Germany who wholly repudiated Rome, and laid a new foundation for ecclesiastical life. At the death of Gerson, Wessel was in the 10th year of his age; and when Wessel died, Luther was a boy of six, Zwingli of five, and Melancthon unborn; while Erasmus was twenty-two, and Reuchlin thirty-four years old. In this manner Wessel cannot strictly be said to have been the contemporary of any of the more celebrated and influential men at the close of the 15th and the commencement of the 16th century. None of them could exercise a particular influence over him; and with none of them could he co-operate. In this respect, he stands alone, but is all the more independent and original. And who can deny that he both understood, and worthily fulfilled, the vocation of his age? With more strength of character than Erasmus, he possessed sufficient originality, stedfastness, and determination to apply the hand of reform to existing abuses. Less bold and forcible than Luther, he had also benignity and prudence to avoid an open breach, which at the time could only have done

[1] Paulus *Pelantinus* says in his Epicedium on Wessel, *Hardenberg* s. 20:

> Hei, quoties avidas magnis sermonibus aures
> Continuit! nunquam mihi talia longa putabam
> Tempora: tota dies vix horula parva videri.
> Impiger alternas audire et reddere voces,
> Et miscere jocos, et seria dicere vafer.
> Jam gravitas in fronte videri, et risus in ore.

harm and produced a powerful reaction. In this way he laid the basis for the change in religion and theology, without too eagerly precipitating it, and was exactly such a reformer as the intermediate period required. Many of his contemporaries surpass him in classical learning, extent of knowledge, and literary polish; but as an original, independent, and lively thinker in theology, he occupies the highest rank, and fulfilled his destination as only a great man could possibly have done. The proof of what we have now said, will be furnished by Wessel's whole theological system, to an account of which we now proceed.

PART SECOND.

THE THEOLOGY OF WESSEL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. WESSEL'S THEOLOGICAL POSITION IN GENERAL.

THE state of Theology in the 15th century presents a rich and varied picture. The systems which had existed in previous ages, now re-appeared in important manifestations, and side by side with them the beautiful rudiments of new things for which a preparation was being made. The *philosophical* was still the prevailing tendency, but in opposition to it the *mystical* arose in greater vigour than ever. Attempts to *reconcile* the two were made, and as a fresh element preparatory for the future, the *Theology of the Bible* sprung up.

By *philosophical Theology* in the middle ages, what we chiefly understand is *Scholasticism*. This still vindicated its vast authority, especially in moulding the form of the science; but it had already ceased to be the moving centre of spiritual life. Its defects were perceived, and a strong desire was felt for a more simple, fresh, and animated modification of Theology. Besides the traditional scholastic form, other philosophical efforts emerged, and Platonism once more took the field, and renewed the conflict with Aristotelianism.

First of all, the older *traditional philosophic method* meets the view; in which the doctrine of the Church, once for all fixed and unalterable, furnished the subject-matter never to be assailed, and the Aristotelian logic the material with which it was worked

up. Still, even this tendency received a fresh quickening by the renewal of the conflict between Nominalism and Realism, and by many of the elements of modern education which were tending to a reformation. We have instances of it in *Peter d'Ailly* at the commencement, and *Gabriel Biel* at the close, of the 15th century. The former, entitled by his admirers the Eagle of France and the indefatigable Hammer of the foes of truth, not merely strove with energy for reform in ecclesiastical affairs, but reached forward from the Scholasticism in which his mind had been moulded, to the Scriptures, and sought on all hands to effect a simplification of theology; and while expounding many of the schoolmen, referred questions not relating to religion to their own proper domain of philosophy. The latter, an admirer of Occam, the intrepid reviver of Nominalism, though penetrated with so profound a sense of the worth and all-sufficiency of Aristotle, as to write sermons upon his Ethics, was yet judicious and moderate enough to reject many scholastic subtleties in science, and, like Peter d'Ailly, boldly lifted his voice against the abuses of the Church.

Side by side with this, a new and *peculiar philosophic method* took its rise, partly in the form of a speculative contemplation of nature and of man, and partly as a restoration of Christian Platonism. A so-called *natural theology* was composed by *Raymond de Sabunde*,[1] an author of great originality. He attempted to found all the doctrines of Christianity upon the laws of nature and the human mind. This deeper acquaintance with nature and one's self, Raymond characterises in the following way: It is alike natural and necessary for man. It enables him correctly and easily to apprehend what is contained in Scripture; Nay, so indubitably does it settle its doctrines, that they are embraced with free and full conviction. All questions respecting God and man are easily solved by it, and the whole Catholic creed established as true. Hence it is now, at the end of the world, indispensably necessary to every Christian for the defence of his faith. Properly speaking, this science is already contained in the

[1] As is well-known, he developed his system in the work Theologia Naturalis sive Liber Creaturarum, &c., of which I use the Frankfort edition of 1635. The passages taken into account in the following view are partly in the remarkable preface to the work, and partly in chap. 11, 13, 31, 63—69.

writings of the holy Fathers. In these, however, it does not appear prominently, but exists in scattered elements, which, like the letters of the alphabet, we have to combine and arrange, in order to discover the true meaning of the teachers of former times. Of course this science cannot appeal to the authority of Scripture, in which it must first produce faith, and which, with reference to us, it precedes. Its arguments must be derived from experience and the nature of things. In fact, there are two books vouchsafed by God to mankind—the Book of nature or creation, and the Book of Holy Scripture. The former is given to every man originally; nay, man is himself the first letter, written in it by God's finger. The latter was not given to him till afterwards, and because, in his blindness, he was unable to read the first. But, notwithstanding, the first still continues common to all mankind, and its characters are incapable of being falsified, obliterated, or misconstrued. Neither can it mislead into heresy. With the Bible, however, all this is possible, and hence the reading of it is confined to the clergy. Both books, must necessarily harmonize, because both proceed from God, the one as natural, the other as supernatural, instruction. If it be asked, in what way this irrefragable knowledge is to be acquired, Raymond lays down as a moral postulate, that a man must be divinely enlightened and purified from sin; for it was the want of these qualifications which prevented the ancient philosophers from correctly reading the book of Nature. At the same time, he also lays down certain theoretical principles, intended to be the foundation of true self-knowledge; in order to proceed from that to a knowledge of God. The key of all knowledge is a thorough comparison of man with the rest of the creatures. By this means man is raised above himself, and attains to an acquaintance with the Creator. The way by which Raymond conducts to God is therefore the cosmological. He then, as a further basement for religious truths, proposes the following canon: Whatsoever we either think or say, has also its opposite and contradiction; and both cannot be true at the same time. A man must necessarily affirm the one, and deny the other. The nature of the case, however, involves that he shall affirm, believe, and embrace that which corresponds with the exigencies of his nature, implements, exalts, and perfects

his inward life,—improves, cheers, blesses, and fills him with hope and confidence, in other words, that which is worthy of love and desire, having in it real and substantial good. On the contrary, he must deny and repudiate all that checks, injures, and destroys his inward life. Were he to do otherwise, he would act contrary to himself and the order of things. From this point of view Raymond lays a foundation for the several doctrines of religion, on the fact of their being more positive, beneficial, and improving than their opposites, and this he does not solely for the doctrines which are termed natural, such as the existence and unity of God, the creation of the world, and the immortality of the soul, but equally for those which are positively Christian, such as that of the Trinity, the incarnation, and the atonement. And here it is that he borrows the larger part of his materials from former teachers, from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and the other schoolmen, in whom, as he says, the particular letters of his system are to be found dispersed. In doing so, however, his method is still peculiar and enlivening.

The impulse to a revival of *Platonism* came properly from Greece. The Greeks had remained uninfected by Scholasticism, not, however, as the fruit of their strength, or from having adopted something better in its place, but as the consequence of their weakness, which disabled them for any important product of their own. It hence arose that Aristotle by no means exercised the same sway over them, as over the inhabitants of the West, their great ecclesiastical teachers of the olden time having once for all given the tone in favour of Plato. This hereditary Platonism among the Greeks began about the fifteenth century to be of consequence also for Western Europe. Men of letters, like Gemistus Pletho, Bessarion, and others, coming over to settle, brought with them into Italy the love of Platonism, and there kindled the same flame in susceptible and profound minds. A sharp contest, waged among the Greeks themselves, on the question, whether the preference is due to the Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy, led, it is true, to no definite result. It had, however, the effect of fixing a more general attention upon Plato and his successors, aud paved the way for a juster estimate of their doctrines, which ere long rose to enthusiasm. About the middle of the fifteenth century, the Platonic Academy was in-

stituted by Cosmo de Medicis. The soul of it was the celebrated *Marsilius Ficinus*, the talented expositor of Plato and the new Platonicians, who, in his theological writings upon the immortality of the soul and the truth of the Christian religion, went perhaps somewhat too far in blending the Christian and Platonic doctrines, but who, at the same time, formed a far more vivid, profound, and enlarged conception of the higher and eternal truths than the generality of theologians either of that or of earlier times. At all events, in judgment and intellectual proficiency, he stands high above his contemporary *Pico di Mirandola*, whom he was the means of converting from the Peripatetic to the Platonic doctrine, but who still continued to combine with the latter, Aristotelianism and certain cabalistical elements, and who was cut off by an early death before his busy mind, overburdened with its knowledge, had attained to a competent ripeness. Involving, however, as it did, spirit, and life, a substance of faith, this positive Platonizing tendency must be considered salutary, not only as opposed to the more lifeless formalism of the Schoolmen, but, in a still higher degree, as opposed to the comfortless *scepticism* which even then, especially in Italy, had taken possession of many minds, and in course of time, produced still greater effects. No doubt it was natural that the excessive tension of dogmatism should call forth a sceptical tendency, which, if allowed freely to develop, must ere long have exhausted itself, and an equilibrium been established; but under the pressure that still checked the exercise of the intellect, only a caricature was the result. Freethinkers, like *Peter Pomponatius* and others, undermined by their doubts the fundamental truths of all religion, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, and then, for the protection of their lives, retreated behind the bulwark of the Church by making a devout acknowledgment of all its doctrines. In order, moreover, to secure for such a practice a theoretic justification, the famous distinction between philosophical and theological truth, was invented, conspicuously shewing the discord which had arisen between religion and philosophy, faith and knowledge, but which appeared so dangerous for the maintenance of the Church's creed, that, at a Council under Leo X., the proposition that a thing

may be true in theology which is false in philosophy, was formally condemned.

As during the whole of the middle ages, so likewise at this period, the practical, sentimental, poetical, and intuitive theology of the mystics arose, as a necessary antithesis to the narrow theoretic tendency of the schoolmen; and the more stiff and lifeless scholasticism became, so much the more powerfully and triumphantly did *Mysticism* lift its head. In an earlier part of the work, we have seen in detail the modifications which this tendency produced in the course of the 14th and 15th centuries. On the whole, we must aver that especially during the latter, without losing in depth, it became more simple and practical in substance, and more attractive and popular in form, and hence also acquired a wider field of action. At the same time, it never wholly lost the individuality and subjectivity inseparable from it, and in virtue of which, it is only adapted to a peculiar character of minds, and narrower circles, and could never rise to such a full conception of the Christian truth as to satisfy all hearts and influence the construction of the Church.

Mysticism, however, makes its appearance not merely as an isolated phenomenon, but is also blended with other modes of thought. In the earlier period of the middle age, a *reconciliation* of it with Scholasticism had been attempted, especially by the Victorines; and agreeably to the wants of the age, the same attempt was now made, but more in the way of psychology and criticism, by John Gerson, styled the most Christian teacher. *Gerson* is next to those who were Reformers in the stricter sense of the word, the most important theologian of his century. Trained by the admirable Peter d'Ailly, early distinguished by scientific attainments, professor and chancellor in the first of the then existing universities of Europe, he took an active part in almost all the scientific and ecclesiastical transactions of his agitated age, especially as the most influential speaker at the Council of Constance, and the intrepid defender of truth and justice even in the political storms of his native land; and even although from our point of view, he may be reproached with a certain scrupulosity and narrow-mindedness displayed in such, among other instances, as the disapproval of translations of

Scripture for the common people, contesting the right of the laity to the use of the sacramental cup, the condemnation of John Huss, and a fondness for inquisitorial measures against free opinions in religion, still, it is impossible to refuse him the praise of high-minded conduct, prudence, and moderation, of dignified candour within the bounds of legality, and of a universal, and, according to the measure of the time, a thorough, scientific education. What such a man approved of in theology characterises the whole age. To the material of the science, indeed, Gerson made no new contributions. Endeavouring generally to simplify it, and in particular, to establish mysticism upon a psychological basis, he pursues in the main the mediatory path of the Victorines, without the discovery of propositions of his own. Respecting the method of science, however, he lays down admirable principles.[1] Here he thoroughly understood the exigency of the time, and, there can be no doubt, exerted a very animating influence upon his more youthful contemporaries. Gerson recognises no opposition between philosophy and theology. In his opinion, they essentially agree; but he denies that philosophy is competent to discover the truths of Christianity, unless preceded by a revelation of the faith; and he also regards philosophy, in common with all the sciences, as the handmaid of theology. In the philosophy of his age, he specially censures a certain mechanical style of conception, such as, for instance, that in the idea of the being of God, prominence is given to mere necessity, and not in the same degree to liberty. In this way, all piety and thankfulness towards the Divinity are done away, all the good He does being represented as flowing not from spontaneous bounty but compulsion. Respecting the method of

[1] In drawing up the following exposition of the principles of Gerson, respecting the study of theology, the following treatises have been used: 1. Lectiones duae contra vanam curiositatem in negotio fidei. *Gersoni* Opp. ed. Du Pin. Tom. 1. Pars 1. p. 86—106. 2. Epistola ad Studentes Collegii Navarrae Parisiensis, quid et qualiter studere debeat novus Theologiae auditor. Ibid. p. 106—110. Alia Epist. ad eosdem p. 110—113. In these letters he names the books which he considered most useful in the different branches and grades of theological study. The selection cannot be unreservedly commended. He also expresses the wish that students should attach themselves to some approved teacher and follow his counsels. 3. Duae Epistolae de Reformatione Theologiae. Opp. T. 1. P. 1. p. 120—124.

study, Gerson requires that philosophy shall precede theology, and that the two shall not be mixed together. Mathematics, logic, metaphysics, and rhetoric, should first be gone through, before the student advances to theology. But then no sophisms and other foreign matters should be introduced into that science, which ought to keep itself pure within its own circle. Gerson, however, considers as the matters proper to theology whatever serves to establish a sound faith, strengthen hope, and inflame love, and consequently only such things as belong to the domain of religion. The true foundations of the science, according to him, are Scripture and experience. Theology extends beyond philosophy, but in turn has its own prescribed limits in revelation. Even in these theses, there exists a connexion with Scholasticism not to be mistaken, but, at the same time, an indirect censure of many of its defects. To this censure, however, he gives still more distinct utterance in an exposure which he makes of the faults then generally prevalent among theologians. He reproaches them, in particular, with two, by which they were hindered from attaining to a simple knowledge of truth, viz., attention to trifles and a love of singularity. With these melancholy daughters of pride, he says, envy associates as their unfortunate mate; and together they have a numerous progeny—disputatiousness, controversy, stubbornness, self love, persistence in private and party opinions, and passionate defence of error. The trifling and singularity of theologians reveals itself in the following particulars:—In a proneness to pass over doctrines that have been fully elaborated and settled, and to occupy themselves solely with such as are still unknown and uninvestigated, that is, to propound what is new in preference to what is profitable—in depreciating clear and intelligible truths, and bestowing an exclusive attention upon such as are dark and difficult, under the idea that nothing but what is obscure and incomprehensible can be profound, whereas clearness in diction and writing is the highest merit in science, and the surest mark of a lucid intellect,—in the pleasure they take in coining new words, particularly for subjects of speculative theology,—in a hasty adoption of the principles of the Heathen philosophers, as was likewise the case with Origen, who had evidently drunk too deeply of the golden cup of Babylon,—in the immoderate predilection for singular doctrines, so that, al-

though faith and truth are a common good, each seeks to appropriate something peculiar to himself, and thus the rivalry of different parties and orders brings strife, division, and errors among Christians, and finally,—in what may be considered the necessary accompaniment, viz., the practice of attacking one teacher and obstinately defending another, instead of taking pains to harmonize their sayings, often more different in expression than meaning, and thereby to reconcile extremes, which would be more salutary for the Church than division.[1] In this place, all the essential, formal and moral defects of Scholasticism are censured; and in other writings Gerson insists as powerfully upon a reform of the subject-matter of theology. He requires that useless speculation, without fruit and solidity, shall no longer be cultivated. It diverted students from what is necessary and profitable, and led others to form quite false conceptions of theology, and to imagine that those only are adepts in it who occupy themselves with such futile points.[2] For the same reason, theologians are called Fantastics, and it is alleged that they know nothing of solid truth, practical duty, and the Bible. In order to set aside a theology so barren, in which he likewise blames an unbounded confusion of terms, Gerson recommends above all the thorough *study of Scripture*, and the appropriation and delivery of its practical parts. In this way, he hopes that able instructors of the people will be formed, who will no longer burrow or soar after what is useless and fantastical, but powerfully labour to reform life.

Here, even in the 15th century, we find its greatest theologian pointing to that which was to be the new and leading feature in the coming evolution. Ere long we behold others addressing themselves still more decidedly to a *vital scriptural theology*. The necessity of a return to what is simple, apostolical, and needful for life, which heretofore had been recognised only by men of the people and popular sects, became now equally

[1] In order to maintain the unity of the faith, *Gerson* suggests among other means the doubtful one of having only *one Theological Faculty* for the whole Church, or, at least, for France, on which, as the pure source, the other and subordinate seminaries of theology might be made to depend. Opp. Tom. 1. P. 1. p. 105.

[2] As such he designates the doctrine of the communicatio Idiomatum Opp. T. 1. P. 1. p. 123.

manifest to the learned. Almost all the theologians of the period are penetrated more or less with a consciousness of it. In contradistinction to Scholastics and strict Dogmatists, Bible theologians, properly so-called, are reared in greater numbers. During the 12th and 13th centuries, only the former were held in high estimation and exercised great public influence. An expositor of Scripture was a very subordinate person, and it behoved him to retire before a Sententiary and a Summist. Now, however, the opinion changed. Scholasticism retreats. It no longer satisfies the mind. Distrust, scepticism, and mockery rise against it. On the contrary, the most esteemed theologians recommend nothing more urgently than the study of Scripture. While the authority of the Church, of Popes, and Councils, begins to waver, the Bible is recognised as the sole means of salvation, and the true rock upon which Christ has founded the Church. It is more and more multiplied by manuscript copies, translated, and spread among the people. Newly awakening philology and the recently invented art of printing, are enlisted in its service, and it gradually attains to that ascendancy whose culminating point appears in the Reformation.

To this tendency *Wessel* also belongs. We have it in our power, however, to indicate his position still more exactly. The zeal for Scripture in its turn followed different courses; one of a more practical and ecclesiastical character, the other more philological and scientific. Upon the one we find *Huss*, *John of Wesel*, *John of Goch*, and many practical mystics. Upon the latter, *Laurentius Valla*, *Le Fevre*, and *Erasmus*. Wessel takes his place in the ranks of the former, but at the same time he is the most scientific among them, and the most intent upon blending the element of practice with that of learning.

No doubt, it is manifest in many points, that he had been trained in the school of *Scholasticism*. Of this we mark the traces in his style. On the whole, however, he stood in the most determined opposition to it. He combated the ascendancy of philosophy in theology which prevailed during the mediæval period, and gave to the latter an independent and Biblical foundation. He avoided the artificiality, quibbling,

and barrenness of degenerate Scholasticism. He directed scientific and devotional contemplation to great, essential, and practically important objects, to what are the really vital points of religion, and did this with simplicity, ardour, and great freshness of mind. Besides the Scholastic, Wessel has also a *Mystical*, element. He possesses an unusual plenitude and depth of pious feeling. He loves to resign himself wholly and unreservedly to it. He strives, like the mystics, to break through the limits of the finite, to blend himself in love and longing with God, and, as the principal means of union with him, employs contemplation and prayer. In these points, we discover the pupil of the Brethren of the Common Lot, and, in spite of many differences, the spiritual brother of *Thomas à Kempis*. On the contrary, the scholastic ingredient in Wessel's mode of thinking, manifestly less important, and only observable in externals, was derived from the schools in which he afterwards studied, and especially from that of Nominalism. Inasmuch, however, as both things co-existed in his mind, and blended into vital unity, they moderated each other, and in his heart as well as in his intellect, established a salutary equilibrium. This had likewise its source in the fact that both rested on a noble and sound foundation, viz. a hearty and intelligent conception of Biblical Christianity. Such was the basis of all that he did in theology, and hence we may describe him as a Biblical theologian, who was equally pious and fond of truth, equally liberal and judicious, who turned the logical proficiency which he had won from Scholasticism against the degenerate form of Scholasticism itself, who had all the deep feeling of mysticism, but was elevated above its subjectivity, and who in this way secured a position which partly vanquished the antagonisms of the middle age, and partly at least made a highly successful commencement towards their overthrow.[1]

As its *Biblical character* mainly constitutes the substance of Wessel's theology, it is necessary at the outset to speak of the way in which he conceived the sense of Scripture. In the interpretation of it, like *Melancthon*, he prized above all things artless simpli-

[1] Respecting the theological stand-point of Wessel in general, compare the beautiful discourse of *Muurling* de *Wesseli Gansfortii*, germani Theologi, principiis atque virtutibus, etiamnunc probandis et sequendis. Amstelod. 1840.

city and naturalness. "Whoever interprets a passage of Scripture," says he,[1] "must adhere to the words of the text, and give no forced explanation. For every forced explanation, which, from fear of objection, deviates from the terms of the canon, must be suspected of heresy." Besides, he constantly read the Bible in a practical spirit, and with direct application of it to life and his own moral improvement. He used to say,[2] "The man who, in reading the Bible, does not daily learn to think less of himself, and does not grow in self-dislike and self-humiliation, reads it not only in vain, but even not without danger." In particular, however, he required of the expositor an ingenuous sense of truth, inducing him not merely to search the Bible for proofs in favour of current doctrines and statements, but to evince susceptibility for all that he meets with in the sacred page. This may be inferred from the remarks against strained explanations, which we have already cited, and from others which we shall afterwards produce.

Considering his zeal for Biblical doctrine and philological research, one might have expected from Wessel *commentaries* upon whole books of the New Testament. For these, however, it would appear, the age was not sufficiently susceptible, nor he himself perfectly prepared. He devoted his attention more to *single passages;* but here he does not confine himself to the incidental illustration of particular terms and expressions (although he often does this with the Old Testament names and attributes of God), but here and there enters into the minute exposition of some whole passage or larger section. In this way, for example, he expatiates upon the narrative of the Syrophænician woman,[3] and there represents the conduct of Jesus towards her, as a mere semblance of severity transitorily put on, and intended to try the strength of the disconsolate mother's faith.[4] In the same way, he explains, with great detail and constant

[1] *Wess.* Opp. p. 845, in the Treatise de Purgatorio.

[2] According to a letter of Goswin v. Halen in *Hardenberg* s. 10.

[3] De Orat. i. 15, p. 27.

[4] Non enim haec animo ideo duro intus gesta sunt, quo foris geri alieno videbantur. . . . . Sed alto consilio dissimulavit suum de ista judicium, opportunum exspectans tunc illi benefacere, quando magna fides ejus multum exercitata, etiam vobis magno munere digna videretur, etc.

practical application, the parable Luke vii. 40 sq., as a singularly profound and pregnant picture.[1] In the same way also he discourses with much logical acuteness on the sayings of Jesus in John vii. 16, xii. 44, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me," and "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me,"—endeavouring to remove from them all appearance of contradiction,[2] and determining the meaning of the latter text to be this. He who believes on me, on account of my mighty acts of power, wisdom, and goodness, believes on me as it is right to do. If, however, he knew Him, through whose mission and procreation, I have received this omnipotence and these immeasurable treasures of eternal wisdom,—a knowledge to which my doctrine would soon lead him,—such a man would certainly transfer the whole piety of his belief on me to the Father, by whom I was begotten and sent. Not unfrequently Wessel also notices the more ancient versions of the Bible, the Septuagint and Vulgate, and corrects them. A false translation, by Jerome, of the text Ex. iii. 14, which had been previously more correctly rendered by the Septuagint, he excuses on the plea that the correct translation might have given offence to the heathen. This he thinks was advisable at the time, as the Church was otherwise distracted with so many heresies. "But now when the Church has been exercised by the disputations of the schoolmen, and established by the holy doctrines of her teachers *(sacris doctorum doctrinis)*; no truth can have any other effect but to edify and confirm it, and it is not expedient to found the right and true doctrine of the simplicity and immutability[3] of the Divine nature upon an explanation that is incorrect. The Jews laugh at us for building, like men in the dark, upon a bad foundation."[4] Hence in the exposition of Scripture, as on every other subject, Wessel desired to have only truth, and truth in all its fulness, and would have refused his sanction, if the forerunners of the Reformation had ever consciously employed wrong exegetical means to gain a good doctrinal end. Wessel quotes the commentaries upon the Holy Scriptures, which were then in use, but more as being

[1] De Orat. ix. 4, p. 161 and 162.
[2] De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 17, p. 451 and 452.
[3] Alluding to Exod. iii. 14.
[4] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 4. p. 419.

something serviceable for ordinary preachers than for men of learning.[1]

Respecting the *principles of religious knowledge*, which usually determine beforehand the construction of a theological system, Wessel certainly adhered, with firm and lively faith, to the revelation contained in Scripture, recognising in the Old Testament the less perfect stage, and in Christ, the complement of the Divine manifestation. At the same time, he did not reject a primitive and universal knowledge of God, with which the special Divine communication connects itself, in order to purify and complete it. This will appear, in particular, in the doctrine of the Godhead, where we shall also have to treat of the sources of Divine knowledge. The present, however, may be the place to state the general conception which Wessel formed of the *nature of piety*. It is true that he nowhere distinctly defines religion; but if we collect together his scattered statements, we shall find that he understands by it, a powerful and morally operating consciousness of our dependence upon God, and a decided recognition of the limits of human nature, connected with a lively perception of the infinite and boundless greatness of God, and with voluntary submission to His law. He understands by it the hallowing of the name of God in the heart, the reference of all we do and all we suffer, and consequently of our whole life, to God, but chiefly inward, fervent, devoted, and active love, which is what chiefly unites us to him. I confine myself, here at the outset, to the citation of a passage which clearly shews his leading view of the relationship of man to the Diety. "Man," he says,[2] "is placed in the middle between two necessities, as between two unsurmountable walls, a necessity of acting and another of suffering. We are under an inevitable obligation to fulfil the law of God, and no less to submit to his dispensations respecting us; for it is impossible that anything whatsoever can happen which He has not willed or ap-

[1] De Magnitud. Pass. Cap. 48. p. 557. Et sicut hodie praeter Canonem plerique Doctorum commentarii sunt apud nos pro *gregariis pastoribus et praedicatoribus*, ita tunc sub Mose et post Mosen pro Levitis de legali sanctione commentarii libri erant, quibus illorum praedicatores populum de sacramentis legis erudirent.

[2] Scal. Medit. i. 5. Opp. p. 199 and 200.

pointed. This latter necessity of suffering is, it is true, not absolute, for nothing of this sort can be predicated of any but God himself, as the first and necessary Being, whereas out of Him every thing is contingent; but it is nevertheless an irresistible and an unavoidable necessity. The first necessity, however, is, at all events, conditional. For although no doubt it be necessary to implement the law of God, if we desire to be saved, still the implementing of it always depends upon our freedom, as it is likewise in our power to take the side of evil and destruction, although liberty to do so never exonerates us from the necessity of obedience to the Divine law; and even he who deviates from it experiences for ever its obligation, threat, and penalty. However straitening and oppressive we may feel it, to be thus shut up between a twofold necessity, the Divine wisdom has admirably appointed, that the restraint not only leaves a way open, but itself becomes the way for man, to his true welfare. We learn from it that there is no escape for us except in compliance with the will and under the guidance of God. Accordingly, it is a great wisdom to perceive these necessities, a still greater to become acquainted with Him who will deliver us from them, and the greatest of all to resign one's self with perfect confidence to his lead." Here special prominence is given to the necessary side of our relation to God, in consequence of which there is no higher wisdom than for man absolutely to subject himself to His infinite will. Along, however, with this fear of the Divine Being, as one fundamental element of piety, Wessel knew how to recognise the other, which consists in a vital, active, and exalting love of Him, and belongs to the side of liberty. This appears from innumerable passages, part of which I have already quoted, and part of which I shall still quote.

Before we now proceed to develop his doctrines severally, let me be allowed to make a remark upon the propriety of such an attempt. Wessel composed no system, properly so-called, but has merely left behind him[1] single treatises upon

[1] All we possess from the pen of Wessel is essays upon particular points of theology, as, *e.g.*, upon Providence; the Causes and Effects of the Incarnation and Passion of Christ; the Supper; Penitence; Purgatory; Indulgence; the Communion of the Saints; the Treasure of the Church; and one that is more extensive than all the rest, upon

theological subjects; and even these are not always conceived in a strictly scientific style, but partially, or even wholly (like the examples to the Scala Meditationis), in a devotional and oratorical tone. Consequently the attempt to develop the theological system of such a writer, and even the method which may be adopted to collect and combine his scattered statements, involve great danger of imputing to him what is improper or false. In spite of its danger, however, we cannot give up the attempt, inasmuch as the only course then left would be, to translate whole writings of Wessel, or to make extracts from them all with a certain degree of fulness. This procedure, however, would lead to many repetitions, and would only hinder the general view. If it is proposed, as is certainly always requisite for the scientific purposes of a monography, to deliver with suitable completeness the peculiar doctrines of the personage whom it depicts, this object can be effected in but one way, which is, to construct an organical and connected scheme from the scattered members of his thoughts; and if in doing this we aim, with a constantly objective view, not to put ourselves in his place, but to allow the man to think and speak in all his truth and peculiarity, and if in constructing a scheme of his opinions, we do not introduce materials taken from another quarter or a method of dic-

Prayer. These essays disclose, it is true, an inward unity of mind, but they do not form any strictly connected whole. They were frequently occasioned by particular circumstances and personal motives, and also frequently refer to personal concerns. This gives a degree of liveliness to the style, but takes from it, in some degree, its scientific character. As respects Wessel's style of diction, it is replete with spirit and sentiment, but more aphoristical than systematic. He is fond of contrasts, repetitions, climaxes, and peculiar combinations of expressions and ideas. Along with an acuteness and clearness not to be mistaken, he has, nevertheless, very obscure and far-fetched passages —which reminds us of *Hamann*. He frequently delivers his thoughts in propositions and outlines, or arranges theological and religious subjects into a scheme, as, for instance, the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, de Orat. iv. 1. p. 79 and 80, the Attributes of God, de Orat. iii. 2. p. 53 and 54; iii. 11. p. 75 and 76. To give vividness to his thoughts, he even attempts to invent parables, which are not, indeed, destitute of worth and liveliness of style, but cannot be said to be of distinguished excellence, or compared in depth, simplicity, and originality, with those of Scripture and the best authors. Specimens of them may be found in the work de Magnitud. Pass. cap. 71. p. 600—602, and cap. 72. p. 602—604.

tion borrowed from later schools, but allow the historical subject in every case to assume its own form, we shall escape the danger of obtruding upon him foreign matters, and hold up a mirror derived from his own writings, in which, were he still alive, the departed author would not fail to recognise his own likeness.

In depicting the theology of Wessel, we might separate the positive and the reformatory elements, and develop each apart, but this separation would be difficult to carry out, as even his positive statements are in part reformatory, and even his controversy, like all which is truly reformatory, is constantly based upon positive grounds. Hence, it appears more judicious to distribute the whole matter into three chapters, of which, doubtless, the two first contain more of what is thetical, and the last more of what is antithetical in his theology. Thus: 1. The doctrine of God and of his relation to the world; 2. The doctrine of man in his relation to God, especially in redemption; and 3. The doctrine of the communion of believers and of the means of salvation. The first chapter then treats particularly (*a*) of the sources of divine knowledge, (*b*) of God's being and attributes, and (*c*) of God in his relation to the world. The second treats (*a*) of the relation of man in his fallen state to God, (*b*) of the person and work of the Redeemer, and (*c*) of the appropriation of the Redemption. Finally, the third treats (*a*) of the Church as the communion of saints, (*b*) of the Sacraments as means of salvation, in particular of penitence and the Holy Supper, and (*c*) of the state after death and specially of Purgatory. In a supplement we shall further state Wessel's ascetical principles.

CHAPTER FIRST.

DOCTRINE OF GOD AND HIS RELATION TO THE WORLD.

1. OF THE SOURCES OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

The more ancient theology of the Schoolmen was not ignorant, any more than that of the Fathers, that the mind of man can attain to a true and well-founded acquaintance with God only in the conjoint ways of practice and of theory, and that it is with his whole being that the inner man must appropriate Divine things. In the progress of its development, however, a schism occurred, and while Scholasticism sought the knowledge of God onesidedly in the strength of the idea, and especially upon the threefold way of negation, heightening perfection, and causality, no less onesidedly did the mystical theology insist upon the acquisition of Divine things by means of contemplation, prayer, and discipline. Even during the mediæval period, it is true, there were not wanting some who sought to blend into one the truth of both Scholasticism and Mysticism; still they were always, to a certain degree, in captivity to the one or the other, or to both of them alike. Wessel, on the contrary, free from the straitening influences of the current Scholastic, and of the Mystical, theology, belongs to those who, immediately before the Reformation, laboured most energetically to make religion once more a concern of the whole man, and do justice to knowledge without depreciating action, and to both knowledge and action, without depreciating love, as essential principles of a higher life.

His doctrine is as follows. The general and shortest way in which man attains to God, is that of an *original knowledge* dwelling in every rational spirit. "As no place is so dark," he says,[1] "as not, in some way, to be enlightened by a ray of

[1] De Oratione Lib. v. cap. 1, p. 88.

the sun, so likewise there is no rational soul in which some measure of the knowledge (notitia) of God is not present; for, as it is said with truth,[1] that nothing is hid from the heat of the one, so may it also be truly said, that no one can hide himself from the light of the Other." This knowledge, however, is not the same in all, but develops itself differently in different minds, according to the rest of their capacities, and their whole moral and intellectual condition, in the way the general light of the sun is received differently by different objects, according to the measure of their susceptibility, situation, and distance. The simple and universal knowledge of God, Wessel likewise designates as His *name*, which lies, as it were, in every spirit, has been uttered into every soul, and hence ought there to be brought to consciousness.[2] On the manner, however, and likewise on the sense, in which this is done, much, in fact, we may say, the whole direction of the life of man, depends. "Our opinions[3] and our whole conception of God take their rise from the first knowledge (*notitia*, consciousness) which we have of Him. So long as this is simple (undeveloped) we call it the name of God; When it is developed, it is the definition (definitio) of His name (the idea of God). . . According to the nature of our original knowledge of God, so will also our judgments, and so the zeal of our efforts be. Thus, he who has a lofty apprehension of God's name, will have likewise a corresponding judgment and a corresponding direction of the will; while he who has a holy apprehension of it, will have the same kind of volitions and thoughts of God. The opposite, however, is also true, and he who forms a meagre conception of the Divine name, will likewise think meagrely of the Divine person; for in all we do, the knowledge which we originally and principally possess of an object is the fountain of our judgments and efforts. . . All men, accordingly, both the pious and the ungodly, are what they are in virtue of (their different conceptions of) the name of God, and it is this

[1] Ps. xix. 7.

[2] De Orat. Lib. v, c. 1, p. 88. Dicitur autem nomen a noscendo, quemadmodum nota et notitia. Est igitur nomen simplicis rei notitia, qua quaeque res cognoscitur. Nomen ergo Dei notitia est, qua Deus cognoscitur. And de Orat. v. 4, p. 92: Notitia autem nomen est.

[3] De Orat. v. 3, p. 91 and 92.

name that forms the difference between the children of perdition, and the children of salvation. . . . The name of God[1] in man may grow, increase, be refined, sanctified, exalted, and glorified; but it may also decrease, be defiled, profaned, diminished, suppressed, and blasphemed; so that, according as it is in any man, so is the man himself, and inversely, as the characters of men are, so is the name of God in them." From these passages, which, by the emphasis they lay upon the *name*, as the compendium of its object, likewise evince Wessel's *Nominalism*, it results, that he supposes an original consciousness of God, a knowledge of him inseparable from reason, as existing in every man, but that he cannot conceive this, even in its first and simplest rudiments, as isolated or separate from his whole spiritual and moral condition, but as necessarily influencing, and being reciprocally influenced by it. According to his view the whole intellectual being of a man depends as much upon the notions which he forms of God, as his notions of God are determined by his whole intellectual being; both are developed, and moulded with and by each other. Hence, in another passage, he also ascribes the original possession of God's name, to no *one* intellectual power, but exclusively distributes it, as it were, among the different powers and tendencies of the

[1] It results from this passage, as it does from various other statements of Wessel, that under the *name*, especially in relation to God and Christ, he never understands merely a word or sound, but that which is combined with the word, and is vitally rooted and operative in the mind, namely, the idea (cum pietate creata notitia) and the substance expressed, or at least approximatively expressed, in the idea. Hence, as vivid designations of the different aspects of the Divine Being, the several names of God, especially in the Old Testament, are very weighty and significant, and he makes them the subject of frequent, although not always of fully satisfying, contemplations. This is particularly the case with the name Jehovah. Comp. de Orat. iii. 5, p. 59 and 60. Ibid. cap. 10, p. 72. Lib. iv. 6, p. 85. Lib. v. 10, p. 103. De Caus. Incarn. cap. 4, p. 419. Respecting what Wessel understands by *name*, the passage de Orat. iv. 7, p. 86 and 87, may particularly be compared. He here says, that the names of things are of two kinds, genuine and substantial names, or empty, vain, and null, just as there are full and deaf nuts. The latter names produce no effect on the mind and heart of him who hears them. This is the case with the names of great objects on the souls of fools; for to them the names of God, Father, Holy, and so forth, are empty and null, and can do nothing to elevate and free their hearts. The true names,

mind. "The name of God," he says,[1] "dwells innately in our memory; and, in like manner, the light of His countenance is engraved over our knowledge, and this light, which shineth in the darkness, is the life of men, and by means of it they justly assent by nature to the truth, that all blessings flow to them from God. In the same way, thirdly, there is also implanted by nature in all men, a desire after happiness, and when this breaks forth, and knocks at the door of prayer, it will also receive."

The foundation of the original knowledge of God is not, however, the mere fact that, in spite of the darkness in which he is involved, man possesses a natural love of truth,[2] for this might have been imparted to him from without; but it rests mainly on his indestructible *relationship to God*. No doubt, Wessel directly avers only of the noble soul that it possesses within it something divine, and that the nobler it is the more it imitates the Deity;[3] but from other passages it appears that he considers an original fellowship in life with God as the property of every rational nature. Thus, among other things, he says, "Every creature that thinks, is of Divine nature;"[4] and "Every rational creature, the moment it exists, is

however, are those which are conjoined with vital knowledge, fall like a beam of light into the obscurity of the soul, and give to those who receive them, power to become the children of God. They produce genuine wisdom, which morally elevates and delivers the mind, and inspire it with magnanimity, so that it despises what is little and mean. This, which is true of the name of God, is equally true of the name of Jesus; and it is only in this sense that we can correctly understand how *prayer in the name of Jesus* is the only kind which is recommended as well pleasing to God, and efficacious. P. 87: Hinc jam plane liquet, quam facile dabit Pater quaecunque petierimus in nomine Jesu. Petierimus, dico, in nomine non vano, sed in vero et sanctificato nomine Jesu. This whole exposition, and Wessel's frequent statements respecting the names of God, are connected with his *Nominalism*. It was chiefly as belonging to this school, though not enslaved by its extreme onesidedness, that he considered names, not as something dead and empty, a nugatory sound, but as vehicles, as a living representation, or, so to speak, the incorporation of an idea, partly comprehending the substance, and operating in the soul of the conceiver.

[1] De Orat. i. 12, p. 22.

[2] Scala Meditat. iii. 4, p. 260. Fere enim naturaliter omnes trahimur agnita veritate.

[3] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. vii. p. 427.

[4] Omnis enim creatura intellectualis natura est divina. De Orat. iii. 8. p. 66.

united to God by an everlasting nuptial law *(aeterna lege nuptiali)*, and virtually commits adultery when it gives itself up to any other. By this bond every creature is endowed with intelligence *(intellectualis)*, for in and of itself the creature is, like a virgin, barren, and possesses nothing which it has not received, however great and exalted its gifts may be."[1] The primitive fellowship in love and life with God,[2] which is common to all rational beings, and in sanctified men is naturally heightened according to the measure of their inward purity, Wessel regards as something so essential that outward and visible wedlock is to him merely its image and sensible representation.[3] In consequence of it, there is likewise of necessity in the human mind a similitude with God; and, in fact, the *triplicity of the intellectual faculties* in man answers to the trinity of the Divine persons. Deflecting from the psychological views that are now common, in so far as to ascribe to volition the states which we assign to feeling, and separating memory, as a particular faculty, from knowledge, Wessel, in the way customary since the days of Augustine, sets up as the chief powers in man, memory, intelligence, and will. These, however, do not exist apart from each other in the mind, but are inseparably united, and reciprocally act on each other. "The inner man," he says,[4] "has three parts, memory, knowledge, and will. To memory pertain reflection *(consideratio)* and comparison; to knowledge, assent, *(assensus)*, inference, demonstration, and judgment;[5] to the will, consent *(consensus*, attachment*)*, effort, desire, and love. As it is therefore impossible that there can be an *(optative)* consent unless there be a *(cognitive)* assent, so neither of the two can exist without antecedent reflection. . . . When man with these three faculties, turns to that which is good, he then is

[1] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 73, p. 604.

[2] We find in Wessel the strongest images employed to describe man's relationship to God, *e.g.*, he says: Every created spirit, inasmuch as it bears within it an image of God, receives, so to speak, a little God in its womb, and brings it into the world in an everlasting and blissful conception and birth. Scala Medit. i. 21, p. 222.

[3] In l. c.: Immo credo, sensibiles externas nuptias non nisi picturam et comoediam quandam esse verarum harum nuptiarum.

[4] De Orat. i. 8, p. 15.

[5] In another passage de Orat. x. 5. p. 178, it is said: Memoria conceptuum est, intelligentia vero judiciorum.

good; when he turns with them to evil, he is perverse and dead." But how the intellectual life of man, being one in its nature, although threefold in the mode of its operations, corresponds with the Divine Trinity, and involves a proof of man's affinity to the Godhead, Wessel signifies in the following passages."[1] In our inner man, which was created in the image and likeness of God, there is a certain trinity, consisting of the intellect, the reason, and the will;[2] and these three, in like manner, are barren, inactive, and indolent, when forsaken by their prototype. Our intellect without wisdom is like an eye without light; and what can this wisdom be, if not God the Father? The Word (the λογος) is the law and the rule of our judgments, and teaches us humbly to value ourselves according to the truth of wisdom; and the Spirit of both, or Divine love,[3] is nutrition to the will." In a somewhat different way,[4] he says, "Let the inner man consider himself as a being endowed with memory, intelligence, and will; let him consider his Creator as Father, Lord, and God; He is Father by goodness, Lord by right, and God by nature. These three Divine prerogatives are to every rational being so many bases of a sacred obligation;[5] for three prerogatives[6] appertain also to the rational creature, by which he not only can and may, but also ought and must, enter into this honourable relationship." Such, as Wessel further explains, is man's position in reference to God. He is knit to him by the memory in his intellect, the cognizance in his reason, and the love in his will. In all the three powers an obligation towards God is expressed. All the three are consequently sources and foundations of piety and

[1] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 74, p. 606. That man is an image of the triune God, Wessel also shews, Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 389: Factus est itaque homo ad imaginem et similitudinem sanctae trinitatis. Et quae sacrae hujus trinitatis potest esse vera similitudo? Sane non corporalis. . . . Interioris igitur hominis partes ad imaginem Dei reformatae tres panes sunt, quos amicus petit poni ante se; sapientiam videlicet verae cogitationis Dei, gloriam sublimiter aestimantis, ardentem amorem verae charitatis.

[2] Mens, intelligentia, voluntas.

[3] Spiritus amborum Deus charitas lac est voluntati.

[4] De Orat. ii. 5, p. 50.

[5] . . . velut sanctae religionis principia.

[6] . . . tres quaedam dignitates.

religious life. It might be said in the sense of Wessel, that religion is the triune elevation of the kindred spirit of man to the triune God.

It results even from these statements, that, according to Wessel's convictions, the onesided way of knowledge, the purely theoretical, does not perfectly conduct man to God, but that for this purpose there is requisite *an elevation*[1] *of his whole spirit*, a training of him to the Divine life, an assimilation to God; "for it is not by steps," he says "that we approximate to God, but by inward concord." The name of God is hallowed in man, the more he cleanses himself from what is profane, and the more he does this, the more he approximates to God. He who seeks God with all his soul, becomes Divine and Godlike, and this likeness to God is greater or less according to the measure of love and inward adoration of God.[2] The means by which man exalts himself to the Divine, or receives it within him, are principally prayer, pious contemplation, and a lively, fervent love. "It is not unprofitable," says Wessel,[3] "to contemplate the ways of the Lord, I mean those ways in which he draws near to us or we to him. In general, by whatever method our heart is united with God or God with us, the same constitutes a way for us to Him, or for Him to us. There are, however, other and more excellent ways, which unite us more closely with him, and induce Him to dwell within us. These are serious contemplation, still more devout admiration, in an even higher degree the investigation of His wonderful works, but most of all longing and love." Prayer and devotional contemplation are everywhere, but especially in the two works, De Oratione and Scala Meditationis, treated by Wessel as an indispensable means of nourishing piety and maintaining vital fellowship with God; and, in fact, a special reason for which he extols prayer is, because it constitutes a point of union and culmination for the other intellectual powers, which in it receive their completion, and being thus harmonised and excited in a way agreeable to their

[1] Si accedit homo ad cor altum, exaltabitur Deus in corde ejus. *Exaltato* igitur *corde* ad altum Deum acceditur; nec ad altum, nisi *alto corde* acceditur. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 83, p. 629.

[2] De Orat. v. 5, p. 93 and 94.

[3] Scala Meditat. i. 6, p. 202.

nature, tend towards the Supreme and Divine being. "There is," he says,[1] "a certain order and natural progression in the powers of the inner man, just as in the things of sense and nature there can be no ripening without an antecedent growth and increase. No fruit is ever matured which was not previously formed, nor any formed which did not previously blossom, nor is there any blossom which was not before a bud. The same process takes place, not indeed in the same periods of time, but yet in virtue of a certain prescribed natural order, with inward purification. The man who prays, desires; the man who prays, trusts; the man who prays, believes; the man who prays, fears; the man who prays, adores; the man who prays, also sinks his mind in adoration. It is, therefore, no wonder that prayer, when impregnated with such blessings, is acceptable, and mighty, and efficacious before God." But neither can *love* be separated from the contemplation of the Divine Being, and from prayer. It is this which gives to the thoughts their strength and fervour, steady direction, and full import; and as it is the purest consummation of the inward life, so does it stand in a continual relation to all the rest of the powers. "From the character of our thoughts, we discover what is that of our love; for if there be no love, then are our thoughts changeable and wandering, and when our thoughts wander, then there is evidently no love. . . . And as in consequence of the want of love our thoughts fluctuate, so are they also perverted by perverse love.[2] . . . . Steadfast love is the anchor of the soul. By constant appetency, as by a hooked tooth which takes a deep hold, it steadies the retrograding bark, and prevents it from drifting before the wind. If you wish, then not to wander in contemplation, love and love steadily, and if you wish your contemplation to be always directed to God, love Him, and as often as you discover that your mind is withdrawn from Him, confess that it is a defect of love, and pray that the grace may be given you."[3] The following passages powerfully extol love as the highest point of union with God, and as the proper blossom of the inward life: "Created love is the image of the uncreated, and the farther we progress in faith to love, the farther we progress also in resemblance to God, and

[1] De Orat. i. 9, p. 18.
[2] Scala Medit. i. 7, p. 203.
[3] Scala Meditat. i. 15, p. 215.

abide in Him and He in us."[1] Again, "The love of God is, as it were, the head and heart of the whole inner man, and from it the rest of the virtues originate and are derived, so that all justice, mercy, prudence, and even the knowledge of all things and secrets, are without a head, when they are destitute of the love of God."[2]

From all that has been said, it is clear that Wessel conceives *religion* as on every side *belonging to the whole of the mind.* The more important this is, the more are we induced to enquire with what arguments he justifies his position? Even the thought that all truths must accord with each other,[3] enunciated as it is by him, not merely in an objective, but also in a subjective, bearing, is here of some consequence. Of more importance, however, is the decided recognition of the inseparable unity of the human mind, which occurs everywhere in his works. He does not indeed overlook the diversity of the spiritual functions, in virtue of which he adopts the threefold division of the mind which we have indicated, and neither does he overlook that sin has introduced a duality into man.[4] Notwithstanding of this, however, he holds fast the conviction, that the mind in its innermost base, is one and the same,[5] that a common indissoluble bond is wound around all its capacities and maintains among them a constant reciprocity of action, and accordingly, that it can participate in the highest truths and blessings only as a harmonious whole and undivided unity; nay, that this participation is the very means by which its complete unity is restored. On the one hand, He says,[6] "According to a man's actions, so is also his will, and according to his will, so are also his judgment and knowledge." On the other hand, he

[1] De Oration. iv. 4, p. 82, with which connect Lib. vii. 9, p. 135.

[2] De Orat. vii. 11, p. 137.

[3] De Orat. iii. 3, p. 55. Propter indivisibilem sacri fontis unitatem omne verum adeo vero consonat, ut alterum ex altero stabiliat. With this the sequel, and especially p. 56, are to be compared.

[4] De Orat. i. 17, p. 30.

[5] He would not have the division of the soul into different powers and capacities, understood as if it were really made up of different constituent parts, as the hand is of the palm and the fingers. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 18, p. 487.

[6] De Orat. v. 4, p. 92, with which connect Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 330. Vult autem nemo, nisi quod ante volendum judicat. Neque vult et judicat, nisi quod cogitatu cognovit mente versans.

maintains as distinctly, that if the knowledge be correct, and the reason enlightened, then is the will also good; admitting, at the same time, that many resist the truth they know, and that, in consequence of a perverse bias of the will, it continues in them cold and unfruitful.[1] For he always looks upon the will and love as the true basis of the spiritual life, so that the character of a man depends not so much upon the state of his knowledge as upon that of his love.[2] If moral worth does not always accompany the perception of truth, still error, ignorance, and the obscuration of the sense of Divine things in the soul, always accompany sin. "Every ungodly man," says Wessel,[3] "is a liar, and every wicked one devoid of knowledge." In order that a thought or known truth may become vigorous and operative, there is always need of fructifying love. "For thinking is barren in a cold mind. A cold mind is as if blasted by the north wind, and bound with selfishness as with an icy rind;"[4] And in another passage,[5] "for as the mind does not advance to volition unless it has previously exercised perception, so that the act of volition does not proceed from the mind absolutely, but from the mind in a discerning state, so likewise no vigorous desire is excited except from the full soul (wholly filled with its object). Vital thought is fruitful for the birth of wisdom; true wisdom, with impassioned thought,[6] is operative and prepared for the fruit of righteousness. All reflection is barren which does not lead to judgment, and all reflection and all

[1] De Orat. iv. 8, p. 87 and 88.

[2] The connexion between love and knowledge is stated by Wessel in the de Sacram. Poenit. p. 781. In the same way, the high import of the moral unity of man, the necessity of a thorough harmony and reciprocal operation of the virtues, so that a single moral spirit produces and contains them all, and in each of them singly all the rest are combined, is distinctly recognised by Wessel and strikingly expressed. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 348: Et quoniam hae singulae virtutes verae sunt, indivisas esse necesse est, ut quaelibet in qualibet ceterarum inveniatur, et quaelibet ex qualibet illustretur. And in another way, Exempl. iii. p. 389: Qui habet unum ex iis tribus (true knowledge of God, sincere reverence and fervent love for him) habet omnes tres: et qui eget uno eorum, omnium trium egenus est.

[3] De Orat. v. 1, p. 89.

[4] De Magnitud. Pass. cap. 65, p. 631.

[5] Scala Meditat. iv. 8, p. 287.

[6] cum fervido cogitatu.

judgment are inoperative when not inflamed, in proportion to the worth of their object, to longing and love."

If, however, we enquire what forms the ultimate and highest unity in the human mind—the basis of all the powers and capabilities, it is the personality (the 'I'). It is this which gives permanence, steadfastness, and indestructibility under all changing conditions and efforts. "The I," says Wessel,[1] "is the first of all things which becomes known to man *(primum ego omnium notorum)*. I would fain, therefore, know what my 'I' is? It is not my will; it is not my judgment; it is not my self-consciousness; it is not my waking; it is not my sleep. Amidst all these conditions, however, they may change, *I* notwithstanding remain; although unless when in one or other of them I cannot inwardly say, I am. What else, therefore, is this 'I,' if it be not the fruitful fountain of all these things? It is so even though none of them may be emanating from it, for it is still capable of emitting good and evil actions, unless when prevented by bodily restraints."

In the foregoing citations, Wessel makes no thorough distinction between the *original and universal knowledge of God*, and that which is *communicated by special historical revelation*. At the same time, he is clearly conscious of the difference, and also states it in various ways. He considers the natural knowledge of Divine things which is procured chiefly by a man's own exertions, as insufficient, wavering, and obscure, and derives all full, pure, and certain insight into the being of God from the Revelation in Christ. We no doubt have an organ and an eye for Divine things, but the light in which we see them clearly must radiate from God: "As our eye, in and of itself and without light, is blind, so likewise our soul, without the light of God's countenance, wherewith we are, as it were, sealed, is condemned to eternal darkness; our knowledge goes astray unless it is led by the law and guided aright by the word of God, and our will

[1] Scala Meditat. iii. 4, p. 259.

[2] Wessel expresses this by saying, that if all the nobler intellectual capacities were to cease, man would be nothing else than a brute, and if even his sensuous functions were to drop away, a stone or a block. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 74, p. 607.

is indolent, presumptuous, and wild, when not kindled by that fire of love."[1] The reasons with which Wessel justifies this view, occur only incidentally and dispersed in his essays. They are, however, substantially as follows: The very infinity of the Divine Being and the narrowness of the finite mind constitute for the latter the basis of a total disqualification for an exhaustive knowledge of God. He appeals to the saying of Gregory of Nazianzen: "That which is divine escapes from us before we can grasp it," and corroborates it by observing, that, with our limited powers of thought, it is difficult for us to form out of all the perfections of God a single idea, owing both to the narrow bounds and the unstable and wavering character of our minds.[2] The human mind, however, is not merely finite. In its finitude it is also weak. The inward eye, although illumined by a beam of Divine light, is yet not strong enough to take in the full splendour of the Divine Being. As our outward eye cannot bear the sun, and can only rejoice in the sight of the flowers and jewels which it illuminates, so neither can our inward eye gaze upon the full sun of the Godhead, and bask in the plenitude of its light. It can only enjoy its rays, when they are reflected in truth and love, and all the virtues.[3] To this we must add that the inward mirror in which we catch the reflected image of the Godhead, far from being bright and clear, is troubled and confused, and turned to a multitude of objects, in place of that which is single and the greatest. A mirror of glass may be held before every object, the noblest and the most beautiful, as well as the humblest and the most vile, without being altered in its nature or defiled; but the intellectual mirror of "our soul, acting as it does with freedom, and turning voluntarily to this or to that object, when it despises what is noble, and applies itself to filth, cannot do this without itself becoming filthy and defiled, so that it is then justly considered a bad mirror. . . . . In the splendour of truth, every falsehood is a darkening spot, dulling the purity of the

[1] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 74, p. 607. Revelation, however, is with reference to God, not a matter of necessity, but of free love. The light of eternal goodness is, as Wessel beautifully says, Sol arbitrarius, non necessarius, sed mere voluntarius. Ibid. s. 608. Also de Magnit. Pass. Cap. 74, p. 606.

[2] Scala Medit. i. 14, p. 214.

[3] De Orat. vi. 9, p. 122.

mirror; but nothing in this splendour would have so obscuring an effect, as were the mirror to believe that it shone of itself, falsely to claim the light as a privilege of its own, and forsaking the truth and robbing the sanctuary, were to become obscured by arrogating what properly belongs to the sun."[1] According to these principles, we need not be surprised, that, although he now and then appeals to philosophical, and especially to Platonic doctrines, Wessel finds, in the contemplations of philosophers upon God, much that is dry, meagre, and unfruitful,[2] and rejects particular sayings of the wise, *e. g.*, of Aristotle and Averroes, as false and derogatory to the Divine honour.[3]

With a sense of the insufficiency of a merely natural knowledge of God, the recognition of the want of a *Divine revelation*, and the adoption of a doctrine which evinces itself to be so, are intimately connected. It is true that this is also a point on which Wessel does not express himself fully or connectedly, but even here occasional statements and his whole system leave no room for mistaking his principles. "We ought," he says,[4] "zealously to embrace the gift which our God condescends to bestow upon us, in having, by his benign tuition, so levelled the difficult path of the Divine names (that is, according to him, of the knowledge God), of which was scarcely accessible, I will not say to the feet, but to the wings and pinions, of the prophets, that now a peasant, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thinks in a more holy, profitable, and sound way on the subject of God, than before the Gospel a philosopher, patriarch, or prophet could have done." The great thing, however, was not so much theoretical instruction, as rather the exhibition and demonstration of the Divine love, which nowhere meets us so convincingly and impressively as in Christ, constituting the basis of a wholly new connection between God and man. "It would be a doubtful thing to say, and a difficult thing to believe, that the eternal God yearned for his creature, or had conferred upon him a peculiar privilege; But that He loved him, who would ever have believed, unless the only-begotten, who is

[1] Scal. Medit. i. 21, p. 221 and 222.
[2] De Sacramento Eucharist. Cap. 19, p. 705.
[3] De Magnitud. Passionis. Cap. 43, p. 548.
[4] De Orat. v. 6, p. 97.

in the bosom of the Father, had declared it? Attested, however, as it now is, by the truth itself, who but a despiser and rebel, a slanderer and blasphemer, dares to disbelieve it?"[1] By his love and holiness Christ is the way to God and eternal salvation. "Behold," says Wessel,[2] "how he is the way, and the true way, leading through the truth of sanctity to a blessed life! See, moreover, how he is the truth in true affliction, true holiness, and true felicity; and in fine, how his life is unspotted in tribulation and precious in holiness." It hence appears, that he looked upon revelation not merely as instructive, but as the impressive exhibition of a holy life and of the blissful love of God, of which man could in no other way have attained to so distinct and happy an assurance. Christ, as man, is the created image of the uncreated wisdom and goodness[3] of God; And the love of God in him is so strong and mighty that, now when we contemplate it, it becomes for us an inward necessity and a second nature to love God in return, "for what can so inflame our love as the fact, that he who was man and yet also the true God, has loved us with so great, holy, and faithful a love, as that no other is for a moment to be compared with it?"[4] The following passage is particularly striking, in which, after depicting the general attributes and exalted nature of the Creator, he proceeds:[5] "But now that God has lowered his majesty, and renounced the plenitude of His omnipotence and wisdom, in order to exhibit Himself, truly in the character of a perfect and pure lover, who for love's sake has renounced all the riches of his house, the Christian counts it not merely equitable or just to love, but looks upon it as necessary and natural, as his enjoyment, his food and his crown. It is no longer to him a precept of law or commandment; his thirsty soul feels it to be a fountain of life, with all his heart, and mind, and strength, not only to adore God, but to love him as his Father, and as such a Father as he is; for of all the servants of God the Christian alone possesses the privilege of glorying in

[1] De Oratione iii. 10, p. 70. With which compare Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 406.
[2] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 3, p. 417.
[3] De Orat. iv. 4, p. 81 and 82.
[4] De Orat. viii. 2, p. 143.
[5] De Orat. iii. 9, p. 68 and 69.

the cross of his God, of him whom the Father delivered up, that he might restore the servant to liberty, and adopt him into the fellowship of the sons." As the Divine love has revealed itself in so splendid and affecting a way, all deliberate misconception and distrust of it, or, in a word, infidelity, is the greatest of sins. Wessel appeals to the saying of Christ,[1] that the Holy Spirit will "reprove the world of sin because they believe not in me," and says:[2] "Not as if infidelity alone were sin; for pride, envy, and falsehood, are so too; But this sin is spoken of, as if there were none but itself, because all other sins remain, so long as this remains, and all depart when this departs, so that when there is no more unbelief, all sins will be forgiven."

The *Revelation* made through Christ is prepared, and in so far *imperfectly* deposited, in the *Old Testament*. Its *more perfect* exhibition is to be found in the Scriptures of the *New*. No doubt, according to Wessel's conviction, there are even in the Old Testament—and he here especially cites Is. liii. and Ps. ii. and cxi.—many evangelical truths and rudimentary intimations of future things,[3] but nevertheless the word of God which is here promulgated, is imperfect, and the *law* which predominates in the Old Testament, continues insufficient and powerless for righteousness and salvation. "The law," he observes,[4] "made nothing perfect; not merely because in those points in which it accords with the Gospel it is no longer law, but Gospel, as even Jerome declares of many passages in Isaiah, but still more, because the law, although it recommend the most perfect love and wisdom, cannot, of itself produce that perfection of wisdom and love with which the Gospel beams and overflows. The chief point, however, is this: The law, no doubt, promises to every man the end, *i.e.*, the fulfilment of righteousness, but the Gospel imparts it." Wessel next represents the law as being likewise so obscure that the full comprehension of it can only be obtained by means of the Gospel, and consequently as bearing in this an evidence of its imperfection. And then he proceeds: "Even though we were to do all that is prescribed to us, which however, no one can do, still we should be obliged to confess

[1] Joh. xvi. 9.
[2] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 57, p. 571.
[3] De Magnitud. Pass. Cap. 40, p. 541.
[4] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 47, p. 555 and 556.

that we are unprofitable servants; for all depends, not upon our willing and running, but upon the mercy of God, who begets us and gives His Son Jesus Christ for righteousness to every one who believes, so that he justifies us, not by the works of righteousness which we do, but by the blood that has been shed, and poured forth for our salvation. Now, even although there are a few hints in which the law does intimate and promise this consummating love of God, still it does not confer it, and consequently does not lead to perfection." "The law," as is said in another passage, "both that which was given by Moses and that which is written in the hearts of all men, merely vexed. It vexed, I say, but it did not justify. There was therefore need for some law which was not vexatious, some paternal law, some sweet law of love which justified, and by which the sons became obedient and inherited the kingdom. Such is the law of the Gospel, which gives no temporal promises, and hence was published after the fulness of the time, in order to admonish us to lift our eye above time, and point our hopes to eternity."

There is, therefore, neither a sufficient revelation of God delivered in the Old Testament, nor do its Scriptures contain a perfectly clear and satisfying exhibition of the true knowledge of Him. The two are vouchsafed only by the *New Testament and its Scriptures.* Christ has carried into completion that which was imperfect in the law. By the purest obedience, He has fulfilled the law. In perfect freedom from all sin, He has brought to light Divine life and Divine love. In Him are hid all the treasures of true wisdom; and of these the Scriptures of the New Testament contain an expression. "If we were permitted to contemplate the profound abyss of the things hidden beneath a simple form, we should find in the Sacred Scriptures such a light of wisdom and knowledge, that the figures *(tropi)* of human language would scarcely be counted worthy to be applied to that Divine mystery."[2]

Of the *fact* that the Divine revelation is contained in the New Testament, Wessel entertained no doubt. Of the *manner* he seems, however, not to have had a clear idea. Here

[1] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 49, p. 559.

[2] Ibid. Cap. 52, p. 563.

we find contradictory statements, which have not been sufciently reconciled. On the one hand, as he is convinced, a certain amount of imperfection cleaves to every human notion of revelation. The subject is never exhausted in the description. The substance always stretches beyond the form. On the other hand, he adheres firmly to the strict notion of inspiration, and looks upon Scripture, both in its totality and in its minutest parts, as a thoroughly Divine work.

The former of these views is developed in the following train of thought: The first, original, eternally perfect, and fully pronounced Word of God, is the Divine Logos, the Son, who is of the same substance with the Father. This Word underwent a certain limitation, when by its agency and according to its image, the world was created, and therein the Infinite expressed in the finite. It did so still more, when it became flesh, and grew from childhood through the several stages of human life; nevertheless, the incarnate Word of God contained within it the whole fulness of the Godhead and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Less perfectly has this fulness of Divine wisdom been deposited and expressed in the Scriptures which testify of Christ whether prophetically or historically, although certainly this has been done better in the latter, *i.e.* in the New Testament, than in the former, *i.e.* in the Old. Still here, as in the Creation, the *Word of God* has not been pronounced fully, but only in an *abridged* and *imperfect* way. "This Word," says Wessel,[1] "although established more firmly than the heavens and the earth, which pass away, and though of a depth and wisdom so great that the angels desire to look into it, is yet not the consummated Word, but is in many ways abbreviated. That such is the case in the Law and the Prophets, we learn by the heavy hands of Moses, by the veil upon his face, by the books that were sealed and closed, and by the covering and curtain before the Holy Place. No doubt, the incarnate Word has now set up His dwelling-place in the light of the sun, so that no one can hide himself from his beams, and the earth is filled with the knowledge of God as with waves of the sea.

[1] De Causis Incarnat. Cap. 5, p. 422. Comp. in general the whole passage p., 421—424.

. . . But even in the Gospel, and in the New Testament, the Word itself is abridged; for although it reflects the splendour of the truth that shines upon it, still it does not adequately express (non adaequat) the Word, which for our sakes became a little child. Many of the words and works of Jesus have not been recorded, which, had they all been, the world could not have contained the books that must have been written. But even on that supposition, they would not have adequately expressed the incarnate Word.[1] On both sides, accordingly, has God abbreviated His Word, in Creation and in Scripture, and on no side has He perfected it." To its proper consummation, as to its perfect victory, the eternal Word of God, which meanwhile is perpetually growing, will only attain at the end of the world, when the Son has subjected all things to Himself, and restored the kingdom to the Father.

From views such as these a strict *notion of inspiration* was not to be expected. Such a notion, however, we do find in Wessel, no doubt arising from the same cause which, in the Protestant Church, and as early as the Reformation, but still more in the period of strict orthodoxy that ensued, produced an excessive tension of this doctrine. Apart from its foundation in Scripture, the opponents of the Catholic Church were forced by their very position to hold with the utmost strictness the inspiration of Scripture; for they were compelled to array against the tradition and authority of the Church, which they combated, some foundation for the truth which was both firm and palpable, solid within and of easy demonstration from without. This they possessed in a general way in the Christian revelation. In the peculiar and mighty struggle of that age, however, their position was only firm and impregnable, if even the Biblical expression of revelation were acknowledged absolutely perfect, every single word regarded as substantially the word of God and incapable of improvement, and the inspiration of all Holy Scripture, both as to matter and form, decidedly maintained. That by this hostility to the authority of the Church, the doctrine of inspiration was pushed to an untenable extreme, not only through the whole Protestant theology, but even among

[1] Verbum tamen incarnatum non aequarent.

the precursors of Protestantism, and especially by Wessel, cannot be doubted, and will clearly appear in the present case, if with the foregoing statements we compare the following. Wessel writes in one of his letters,[1] "All Scripture is a connected whole *(una copulativa)*, whose several parts must necessarily be inspired by the Holy Spirit, and true; for the whole cannot be true, *if even the smallest part be false.* Of this whole, however, one of the parts is, that the whole law must necessarily be fulfilled, so that not a jot or tittle fail. The Divinely inspired Scripture must therefore be perfectly fulfilled, so that not a point or letter fails."[2] And then, in conclusion:[3] "The Holy Scripture cannot be taken to pieces *(non solvi potest)*, for all Scripture forms a necessarily connected whole, so that *not even the smallest occasional statement (contingens categorica)* therein can be false." The same polemical reference also appears very distinctly in a passage, where Wessel opposes the authority of the Apostle Peter and of his first Epistle, as a book inspired by the Holy Spirit, to the authority of the Pope, arguing that the former in all respects, and even so far as single words, is perfectly free from error, to the possibility of which, however, the latter is subjected.[4]

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2. OF THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Wessel's doctrine is, in the main, as follows: The *Being of God, in and of itself*, and irrespective of the creation and every act, is the most perfect and exalted. "How should we not love thee, the Father and the God of all things? If we but contemplate Thee as the infinite, the immeasurable, the incomprehensible, and supremely perfect God, even though thou hadst created nothing, and though the whole universe of beings had existed of itself from eternity to eternity, ... still, as equitable judges, and acting on the principle

[1] Opp. p. 858. In the earlier edition of the Farrago rerum theol. among the Essays upon Purgatory.

[2] This latter clause stands only in the more ancient edition, and not in the subsequent one.

[3] p. 863.

[4] De Communione Sanctor. p. 811 and 812.

of preferring to the excellent that which is more excellent, though we ourselves derive no advantage from it, we should be obliged to render to Him who is over all, even were he not the fountain of our existence, our highest praise and hymns of adoration; and this would be the more obligatory, the more His worth surpasses that of all others."[1] Pure and abstract though it be, Wessel speaks with enthusiasm even of this idea of the Divine Being, as the loftiest, holiest, and most luminous point of human thought; and, following no doubt the lead of *Anselm* or the Scholastic tradition proceeding from him, draws from the necessity of *proofs both of the existence and the unity of God:* "O Thou, whose existence is true, primary, perfect, and necessary, thou who art sufficient for thyself, what art thou? Give me some idea of thee, worthy of thy nature; for it will be to me eternal life to know thee, as the first Being free from all change and corruption. . . . . The idea of the pure Being is not dark, because it does not relate to a dark and ignoble object. It is not confused, because it does not relate to an object that is undefined. It is not composite, because it relates to an object that is simple. . . God is the prime Being; He is a necessary, living Being; He is a seeing, necessarily intelligent, self-cognizant, self-enjoying, wise, and willing Being. *The non-existence of God would involve that something did not exist which necessarily must exist.* Further, God is such a Being, that it is impossible not only to conceive anything superior to Him, but to place anything similar beside Him, or in any degree similar to Him; for whatever good thing you may conceive, and however good you may conceive it to be, you will always linger far behind, even would you soar upwards with the flight of a cherub and the glance of a seraph."[2]

In particular, Wessel, as a *Platonician*, urges the self-necessitating, but outwardly unconditional, the absolute, and immutable *being* of God,[3] which even in the Old Testament is designated by the name Jehovah;[4] and only objects, that many philosophers, like

[1] De Orat. iii. 9, p. 67 and 68.
[2] De Orat. iii. 11, p. 74 and 75.
[3] Scala Meditat. i. 5, p. 199.
[4] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 4, p. 419. De Orat. iii. 11, p. 74, iv. 13, p. 78.

Aristotle and *Averroes*, retained the idea of the Divine self-sufficiency and unchangeableness in so rigorous and one-sided a way, as to have denied that God knows, loves, and wills anything at all external to himself, or that his will undergoes any evolution in time, by virtue of which it is possible as regards Him even to speak of anything future.[1] If God alone is the absolute unconditional Being, then all being external to Him must be conditional and dependent upon Him; yea, everything has its true being and subsistence only in the supreme, all-comprehensive Being, who is God. "God only is," says Wessel.[2] "All other things are what they are from Him. And God truly is.[3] Other beings, although they are, have yet no true existence, because they are so much the less substantial, the more they are remote from the rank of that Being who truly is." This dependence in the case of man relates not merely to the whole course of his existence, but in particular, to his thinking and acting,[4] to the acquisition and improvement of all higher blessings. The true wisdom of man is derived from the creative Wisdom which imparts itself to him, his love from the preventing love of God, his justice and compassion from the God who is just and compassionate.[5] Moreover, this dependence is not confined to man, but is the relation in which all created beings and even the highest spirits stand to God;[6] and it is from it that the absolute and sole government, the monarchy or unity of God, is derived.[7] In these points, especially in the doctrine of God's

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 4. p. 420.

[2] De Orat. iii. 12, p. 76.

[3] The *self-sufficiency*, the absolute self-satisfaction of the Divine Being, is frequently and forcibly described by Wessel. For example, having remarked that God, who is one and simple, has life only in himself, he says: "As the vernal sun obtains nothing from the blooming rose, nothing from the fragrant violet, and nothing from the sportive midge, so can Thy ever-blessed life, whose fountain is in thyself, receive no addition through the bliss and glory of the Cherubim and the Seraphim. It is a blessedness to them and not to Thee, that in eternity they present the praise which blesses themselves." Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 360.

[4] De Magnit. Pass. p. 536, where, among other things, there is the proposition: Impossibile quidquam a quoquam, nisi cooperante Deo, fieri.

[5] De Orat. iii. 8, p. 66, and other passages.

[6] Compare the Theses de Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 15, p. 446.

[7] De Orat. vi. 6, p. 114.

absolute being, we find Wessel agreeing with the *Mystics* even of the *pantheistical* school, in so far as to express the perfect dependence of all created things upon God at every moment of their existence. He differs from them, however, in not absolutely denying to created things, being and existence. They have, he says, not a mere accidental, but a relatively independent existence, which, however, has always its vital root in God.

The Divine *attributes* are several times developed and classified[1] by Wessel, without, however, any original or peculiarly noticeable remark. The same is also the case generally with the *doctrine of the Trinity*. Wessel here adheres to tradition, and teaches three Persons inseparably united in one Divine Being. At the same time we find in him the Schoolmen's speculative doctrine of the Trinity extended. The three Divine persons correspond with the three fundamental powers of the human mind. The Father is the Divine wisdom, the all-comprehending intellect; the Son the Divine reason; the Holy Spirit the Divine love, which is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son, and the principle of love and sanctification emanating from both and diffused over the whole spiritual kingdom.[2] He states the doctrine of the Trinity as follows: God is the first spiritually creative life, from which all life emanates, the νοῦς πρῶτος, the original idea. This cannot be unfruitful; but would be so, if it did not glorify itself above all things. The glorifying of the self-cognisant Father, or his judgment of himself (the self-contemplation and self-knowledge of God), is the Son, the λόγος πρῶτος. This λόγος πρῶτος, or the first glory of the Father, has life in itself, like the original idea (notio prima), the Father. But neither must it be supposed that the two have been inactive from eternity. This would be the case, if knowing and glorifying Himself, the Divine being had not also loved Himself from eternity. He did, however, love Himself, and begot the one eternal and living love, which has life in itself. These three together, and each apart, are the life that remaineth in itself. They are the sole life that knows itself and all other things, glorifies itself

[1] He gives schemes of the Divine attributes, *e.g.*, de Orat. iii. 2, p. 53 and 54, iii. 11, p. 75 and 76.

[2] Compare, *e.g.*, de Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 74, p. 606 and 607.

and judges all things that are without it, loves itself and all things for its own sake. But we are the likeness of this triune God, in so far as we know, glorify, and love Him for his own sake.[1]

It will be sufficient to produce a few passages containing the doctrine of Wessel upon the second and third Persons of the Godhead. "The Son is the first and eternal Word of God, co-eternal with the Divine mind, equal in power, truth, and divinity with the Father, begotten before all time.[2] This Word was abridged, when the whole creation was made and then arranged after His image, that it might subsist and imitate, that (the Divine) Word from which it proceeds, and, by imitation, shew it forth; and when it was also created rational in order to know it, enter into fellowship with it, and be enlightened by it." In like manner in another passage,[3] the Word is designated as "eternal, necessary, existing of itself, and sufficient for itself." In Christ there was a threefold image or manner of being,—the image of God, the image of a servant, and the image of the highest creature. "The first image is eternal, the second temporal, the third commensurate in duration with the creation.[4] The second He took upon Him that He might restore sinners. The third He would have taken upon Him, even although man had not sinned. According to the first image, He is equal to the Father in all things, in power, wisdom, and goodness, . . . and in virtue of it, He was competent from the first moment of His incarnation, to bless the nature which He had taken upon Him."[5] Respecting this relation of the Logos to human nature, and all, if we may so express it, which belongs to its history, we shall speak when treating the doctrine, person, and work of Christ.

The *Holy Spirit* is by Wessel designated God in the same sense as the Son, "as the truly eternal, necessary, proper, and

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 368.

[2] Wessel decidedly repudiates, no doubt in parabolical diction, but in the most distinct manner, Arianism as a plague, the author of which was very deservedly excluded from the Church. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 71, p. 600.

[3] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 2, p. 415.

[4] . . . . temporalis, aeterna, aeviterna.

[5] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 17, p. 451 and 452.

kindred Spirit of eternal wisdom, as the natural and peculiar love between the Father and the Son."[1] He expressly calls him the third person in the Godhead,[2] and more orthodox in this than his friend *John of Wesel*,[3] seeks to demonstrate the doctrine of the Western Church, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, which he does on the grounds already urged, but with less clearness, by *Augustine* and the *Schoolmen*. "This Spirit," he says, "is the reciprocal love, the eternal spontaneous gift of love between Father and Son, and pertains therefore to the one, no less than to the other;"[4] and again he says, that Christians, if they have the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God, are conscious to themselves that they have therewith also the Spirit of Christ.[5]

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3. OF GOD IN HIS RELATION TO THE WORLD.

In defining the relation of God to the world, which is the main subject of the book *De Providentia Dei*,[6] Wessel sets out with the principle of God's universal agency in the world, and of the absolute dependence of the world upon the Divine will. At the same time, the thought of the *immanence* of God lies at the foundation of all his statements; and the question might arise, whether he had not, through the medium of mysticism, which was

[1] De Orat. xi. 1, p. 182.

[2] De Orat. vii. 1, p. 125.

[3] See Vol. i. p. 296.

[4] De Orat. vii. 1, p. 125.

[5] De Orat. ii. 2, p. 43: Quia Deum Patrem, patrem vocant sicut Filius, ergo spiritum Filii habent. Non igitur tam donandum Spiritum Sanctum petunt in oratione dominica dixerim, quam datam jam primo verbo totam Trinitatem signant. In like manner Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 405, where the Holy Spirit is expressly called the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

[6] De certissima et benignissima *Dei Providentia*, quae operatur omnia in omnibus, et disponit omnia suaviter. It is the first essay in the Farrago rer. Theolog., and is to be found in *Wess.* Opp. p. 711—733.

then in so many ways pantheistic, also embraced an essentially *pantheistic system?* There are passages in his works which seem to corroborate this. He admired the way in which St Francis immerged himself in nature:[1] "Embracing the whole creation with fraternal love, he called the fire his brother, the lark his sister, and heat and the sun, as proceeding from the same God, his brethren;" and then he adds, "But still more does it strengthen this awe of a reverential mind, to recognise God as operating in all things, warming in the fire, shining, fructifying, and promoting vegetation in the sun, so that it is not merely the creatures which minister to us, but the Creator (in them) who bestows all things upon us." In the same way, in the moral[2] domain, he recognises in the truly pious the children of God, a perfect unity of spirit with Him, "the being like him, and partaking of his nature,"[3] and here uses expressions like those which we find in *Eckart.* In Wessel's case, however, these stand evidently in quite a different connexion. They are not the strict expression of the Pantheistic theory, but the poetical expression of a heart immerging itself in the Deity, and inwardly conscious of His presence. Brought back to what they substantially signify, they reduce themselves to this, that, as we have already observed, he had a lively conviction of the immanence and universal agency of God in nature and the spiritual world, and was as little able to conceive a merely extraneous God, as a world evolving by itself and without a continual experience of the power of its Creator. No one with the slightest knowledge of Wessel, can doubt that he kept God and the world apart, considered the latter as a spontaneous and ever-dependent product of the creative Spirit of the former, and conceived this creative Spirit as self-conscious, absolutely free in its operation, and transcending the world in which it dwelt. In this sense, accordingly, we are to understand the following statements of Wessel; while, on the other hand, they corroborate what has been said.

[1] De Provid. p. 714. Comp. de Orat. iii. 5, p. 59.

[2] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 772 and 773.

[3] The expressions which Wessel uses, are: Deiformes et dii. We find the same in the Greek Fathers, who were not at all Pantheistical. See Gregory of Nazianzen, 435 and 452.

The living and almighty God was, in Wessel's view, the ultimate and original basis of all phenomena in the natural and moral worlds. Appealing to *Plato* and his school, especially to *Proclus*,[1] he refers even the operations of nature, as something secondary, to God as the first cause, and draws the distinction that nature is the will of God, in so far as God wills by rule, whereas miracles are the will of God in so far as he does not will by rule.[2] At the bottom, however, every acting cause is nothing, but either God operating himself, or a co-operation with the operating God. "So perfectly," he says,[3] "does God reign in all things, that not only do they happen according to his will but also by his will, and without his will nothing could happen, by any cause however naturally operative. Hence other co-operating causes *(concausæ)* are neither perfect nor supreme causes. God, however, reigns perfectly, supremely, and as final cause. He reigns, because, by his knowledge, appointment, and will, he makes things perfectly and substantially to subsist, and preserves them as he wills without any change in himself, which is the case with no other cause; and because, by virtue of his mere volition, and without the agency of secondary causes, all that happens would happen nevertheless." In this sense, even Wessel would fain designate natural causes, whose existence in the world is not to be denied, with the expression, occasions (occasiones); thereby seting up a *kind of occasionalism*,[4] in which, however,

[1] Wessel repeats with approbation the declaration of *Proclus*, that the first cause not only exercises greater influence than every secondary one, but that all other causes are but accidental, and that the first alone is properly necessary to the production of the effect.

[2] De Provid. p. 711 and 712, with which comp. de Orat. iii. 14, p. 78.

[3] De Provid. p. 712.

[4] What is usually and in the narrower sense called *Occasionalism*, is no doubt as a finished theory, a product of the Idealistic Philosophy of later times. At the same time we find in Wessel a point of view which we may likewise designate by this name. The term Occasionalism is used in a double sense. It either means a peculiar theory respecting the relation of the soul and the body, which was devised in the School of Descartes, and principally by Arnold *Geulinx* († 1669 as professor of philosophy in Leyden), according to which soul and body, as essentially different substances, do not directly operate upon and determine each other, but exercise their reciprocal influence by means of a third, a continual agency of God, who, in the one part of man, calls forth the changes corresponding to the other. Or the word Occasionalism designates a particular doctrine respecting

the final determining principle is still to be found only in God. "God operates in all the outward agency of the creatures, in such a way, that whether secondary causes co-operate or not, the effect always takes place when *He* efficaciously wills. But nothing happens when he does not efficaciously will it, with whatever natural impulse and appetency other powers may be set in motion. Accordingly, although the secondary causes are in a certain point of view actual causes, still they are to be considered as comparatively mere occasions; so that in fact our cares and thoughts ought properly and wisely to be directed exclusively to *Him*, whereas secondary causes are but of a co-operative nature."[1]

On this principle Wessel solves the contradiction which the idea of *miracles* presents to the understanding. That contradiction mainly arises from the supposition of a separation, or even antagonism, between God and nature. Wessel, however, admits nothing of the kind. All nature is to him only an expression of the Divine will, and pervaded every moment by the omnipresent power of God. The *miraculous*, accordingly, differs from the natural only in this respect, that it proceeds from an act of the Divine will for which experience furnishes no definite analogy; whereas the natural phenomenon is the expression of a law of the Divine will with which we are better acquainted by experience in other cases. "If nature," says Wessel,[2] "is nothing else but the will of God regulated by the law of custom, and if a miracle is the will of the same God in an extraordinary way *(praeter solitum)*, it is manifest, that the difference between natural effects and miracles does not depend upon the diversity of their causes, but upon the mere circumstance of their being common or uncommon." Accordingly, he sees, as the pious mind always does, all things in God as dependent on his will, and in so far all is miraculous to

the generation of human and other organic beings, which supposes that God in every case produces a living creature, when the physical conditions to this end are present, so that these conditions are but the occasions *(occasiones)* and vehicles, while God is the primal and creative cause. This principle is generalized in what we have in *Wessel* called Occasionalism; inasmuch as in all the productions and changes of the world he regards the finite powers and causes only as occasions, but God as that with which the determination lies.

[1] De Provid. p. 714.

[2] De Provid. p. 715.

him; but then again he conceives the miraculous in a narrower sense as an unusual and abnormal operation of God, whereas everything else follows according to the more known law of the Divine agency. They who teach that God has so arranged all things, that they operate of themselves, and not God in them, suppress and annihilate, according to Wessel's conviction,[1] all true and vital piety.

From the belief in the omnipresent government and operation of God, Wessel draws *practical conclusions* of great importance. All which happens to us is ordained by God, and is accordingly good, if we would rightly improve it for our sanctification. In that which as Divinely ordained is necessary, man must freely acquiesce.[2] Every one should labour for his eternal salvation and temporal welfare; but when he has done all in his power, the issue depends substantially upon the Divine blessing, and this he must expect in assurance of faith.[3] Every good thing comes from God. In all the good that man does God co-operates, and without His help man can do nothing.[4] These thoughts Wessel develops in various aspects. In particular, he applies faith in the decrees of the Divine will to the determination of the length of human life. God has appointed to every individual the moment of death. He it is who has united

[1] De Provid. p. 714.

[2] So acquiescent ought he to be in the Divine will, as not even to desire the recovery of health when this is not the will of God. De Provid. p. 717.

[3] De Provid. p. 715 and 717. Wessel appeals to the text: Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it,—and then adds: "No doubt we must watch and ward, but at the same time remember that our watching and warding is nothing, and with this knowledge and this confession, unite the confidence that God will watch, while we pray to him to do it and adjure him by his goodness (properly piety, per suam pietatem), not to leave us unprotected, and finally give him thanks when he protects us."

[4] De Provid. p. 713. Wessel states the proposition, that in the important works of salvation men no doubt co-operate, and in so far are fellow-labourers with God, but that they derive from Him the power to do so. "To will and to do is of God, and by that co-operation of ours, it becomes our sin or our piety. We enter into fellowship with God who works, and this consonance itself comes partly from the grace of God and partly from us; from us in as far as we also work; from God, in as far as he works as the supreme and perfect cause."

the soul with the body, and on him alone it depends to sever them. "No temperance, no soundness of constitution, no health, contributes to length of life; no sickness, wound, or power of iron or of fire can shorten it—without the interposition of his decree. On the contrary, it proves nothing that we see men die by hanging or burning, and that the multitude believe that natural causes co-operate in what takes effect wholly as a consequence of the will of God, for the will of God alone separates what it alone conjoined. Not only does God uphold the order of outward things in consonance with his decrees, but he produces also the occasions of them, in order that we may believe that he reserves man entirely to himself. And as in point of fact we depend upon Him alone, so let us adhere to Him by love to the last, and become one spirit with Him."[1] The last observation shows that Wessel does not mean to teach the fatalism of Mahomet, but a Christian resignation of love and confidence.[2] In like manner, as he rejected no human labour, exertion, and care, and in all things pointed to the Divine blessing as supremely and essentially necessary, he could not, on Christian principles, consider death itself as "the greatest of evils;" but rather combats the opinion of *Aristotle* that it is so, and finds the worst thing for every man to be the loss of the object of his supreme affection.[3] And just as little is he disposed with *Plato* to consider reflection upon death (*μελέτη θανάτου*) as the height of all wisdom.[4] The highest wisdom lies in the consideration of the great and important things which are to follow it, and of the doctrines which worthily prepare us for it.

Of course Wessel was obliged also to consider the *evil* in the world, as ordained by God, and here he *justifies God* by saying that He permits it with a view to a higher end. "A wise "Creator," he says,[5] "always ordains the less good for the sake of

[1] De Provid. p. 722. [2] De Provid. p. 727.

[3] De Provid. p. 724 and 725: "To every man the loss of what he loves is the most dreadful. It is the bias of love which distinguishes the pursuits of the wise man and the fool. It is love alone that decides what to every man is most dreadful."

[4] De Provid. p. 727.

[5] De Causis Incarnat. Cap. 15. p. 448. That evil must always tend to promote good, is very originally and ingeniously expressed by Wessel in the following propositions: "The first and greatest misery

one better." The evils which the redeemed and the subjects of sanctification endure, are not designed for punishment, but for discipline. For them death acquires an import different from that which it has for the sinner. "Death, which is inflicted as a penalty upon the sinner, when a full atonement has been made, is a penalty no more, but becomes a salutary means of imparting greater blessings. Nor is this the case merely with death, but also with the weakness and poverty with which our life on earth has to conflict."[1]

CHAPTER SECOND.

DOCTRINE OF MAN IN HIS RELATION TO GOD, ESPECIALLY AS THE SUBJECT OF REDEMPTION.

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1. OF MAN IN THE FALLEN STATE.

Christianity, and every theology which stands in vital connection with it, looks upon the general moral history of the human race, and consequently upon that of the individual, as a lapse from the condition of primeval innocence, and a restoration to a condition of sinlessness and sanctity, proceeding from God and effected by Jesus Christ. Here, unfolded to our view, we have a connected series of doctrines rudimentally involved in that of the originally innocent but afterwards somehow corrupted state of man, pointing, as their ultimate scope, to the final and perfect felicity of the

for Satan (properly the Dragon) is, to know clearly that God is ever-blessed in himself. . . . The second misery is to see in himself and all others that God has given to the Lamb, as conqueror, a name that is above every name. . . . The third misery is that Satan himself, with all the host of darkness, has prepared this crown of victory for the Lamb." De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 38. p. 532. The poet expresses the same idea in another and a more general way, when he designates Mephistopheles as "a limb of that power which always aims at evil and always does what is good."

[1] De Provid. p. 726.

race, and collected around the doctrine of redemption as their quickening centre. Every alteration in any one of these doctrines entails, if we reason consecutively, alterations in all the rest; and therefore in every theological system the highest importance attaches to the manner in which the doctrine of the original state of man and its loss is conceived, as this is the point from which all the rest proceed. The clearest evidence of the remark is the contrast between the doctrine of the Protestant and the Catholic Church, in the whole circle of their articles. The discrepancy which we here find, had its foundation even in the antagonistic theological systems of the middle ages, and ultimately in Augustinianism and Pelagianism, which were also rooted in history. But we need not here trace that foundation farther.

In this antagonism, which reappeared so sharply in the 16th century, Wessel has his position; and if we look away from particular statements in which he is less strict, and contemplate the whole tendency of his mind, it is manifest, as might have been expected from a forerunner of the Reformation, that he is enlisted on the side of the Paulo-Augustinian system, *i.e.*, he has the conviction of a condition of man originally pure, but which has been essentially depraved by sin, and can only be repaired by the agency of Divine grace. He limits the free action of man in his recovery to the acceptance of salvation, recognises the absolute necessity of the grace of God, regards Christ as the only fountain of peace and salvation, and excludes all human merit.

However decidedly Wessel holds these principles, they are not at all points elaborated with equal fulness. In particular we find only occasional and detached statements respecting the *original condition* of man and his *universal moral depravity*. The most important passage of this kind is the following:[1] "In the state of innocency there was the necessity of breathing, eating, and sleeping, and, against impending dissolution, the fruition of the tree of life. After the fall, however, the yoke of our necessities *(necessitatum)* was aggravated, so that we have need of fire and iron, without which we can procure neither bread nor meat, nor any kind of drink but water. Besides these there is

[1] De Orat. xi. 3, p. 184.

the need of rest,[1] admonition and society; for how great the gift of God included in human society is, may be learned from the miserable condition of him who, being blind and deaf and dumb, can associate with his fellows little more than a beast, and is destitute of all the advantages which man imparts to man by admonition, help, and comfort. To these are added the corruption from the operation of injurious circumstances, the necessity of distempers and old age, and finally, that which most certainly awaits all men, death. And even though these evils may to some degree be alleviated, they still remain; and are not done away so as to deliver us entirely from them, but we must be taught that it is not on this side the grave that we are to seek for liberty. A serpent, a stag, a raven, and an eagle, would in that case be more free than all men, as they do not need the help of fire or of iron. The liberty of man, accordingly, consists in elevating himself to God, which is done not by running or flying, but by first casting off the fettering restraints[2] of passion, and then using the pinions of love, judgment, and thought, and so finding sweet enjoyment in God, with the assured hope that He will fulfil all the prayers of the heart. The way to this liberty is the contempt of the necessities to which we are subjected, so as to be unconcerned about bodily wants, and to have no particular predilection for the flesh." The short but weighty intimations in this passage are clearly based upon the following convictions; that man, in the original state of innocency, though subjected to certain natural conditions, was free from oppressive wants, from the necessity of suffering, from sickness, and from death; that the enjoyment of the tree of life secured to him immortality: and that he carried within himself the undiminished power, independently of the help of others, of being and accomplishing what the idea of humanity implies, viz., rising to fellowship with God. By *sin*[3] he has forsaken the state

[1] Under the restraints of man's variable life, Wessel reckons the necessity to which he is subjected of sleeping every twenty-four hours, by which he is, as it were, for a season disanimated; somnus enim, si semper duraret, quid nisi sempiterna mors esset? Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 399.

[2] Properly all *bird-lime*—omni concupiscentiarum *visco* absterso.

[3] It is true that Wessel nowhere expressly gives an *idea of sin*, but inasmuch as, on the one hand, love, and love to God, is the basis

of innocence and pure nature. His wants have multiplied and become more burdensome. He must suffer and die, and—what is worst of all—if left to himself, he would be little better than a stupid and speechless beast. It is only by means of others, and only among men, that he becomes a man, and elevates himself to true liberty, which, however, does not consist merely in the abolition of natural restraints and wants, but, in spite of the continuance of these, in perfect fellowship with God, spontaneous compliance with the Divine will, and the complete victory of the mind.

When he contemplates with a serious eye his inward state, man discovers it to be sunk far below the idea of perfection. The end and aim proposed to him is similarity to God. This was from the very first involved in that image of God[1] which belonged to him by nature, but which requires to be more purely and

and fountain of all good (nam qui amat, integre obedit. Scal. Med. Exempl. i. p. 349), and inasmuch as, on the other hand, wilfulness and self-love is the foundation of all evil (omnes enim declinaverunt in amore sui. Scal. Medit. Ex. ii. p. 376), there can be no doubt that in his view sin would consist chiefly in the *want of Divine love*, and in a life of *selfishness* opposed to a life of love. This he also intimates Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 352: Quod ergo peccatum meum, propter quod instabile adeo factum est cor meum, nisi *peccatum non amantis?* An non hoc peccatum? et peccatum non dico magnum, non grande, sed ingens peccatum? talem amatorem, talem sponsum animae meae, talem testatorem, tale testamentum non amare? And further, in the same work, p. 356: Nihil me a sancta mensa tua excludit, nisi peccatum meum, peccatum non amantis. And p. 357: Omnis vita non amantium tepor et segnities est: quare neque vita censenda, sed somnolenta magis, ut vere est, mortis imago. Solus digne amans vivit. If sin be death, want of love is the true sin, for it destroys all higher life. Peace with God is restored only when all love which is hostile to the deity, *i. e.*, all love of self, is removed from the heart. Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 404: Pacatus ergo intra se pacem facit cum Deo suo, cum quo pacificus esse non potest, nisi omnem adversantem amorem, *amorem* videlicet sui, expurget et expugnet. Inasmuch as that which separates us from God can only be sin, false self-love and selfishness are in Wessel's view identical with sin. It is manifest that he forms his notion more from the theological and religious, than from the mere ethical point of view.

[1] Inasmuch as only men, and, in general, rational natures, have been created after the Divine image, it is only in reference to them that God is called Father, but in reference to all that is irrational and not spiritual, he is author and Creator. De Orat. iii. 5. p. 59.

perfectly restored by his sanctification.[1] From that moral altitude, however, we are so distant, "that it behoves us daily to confess that we are farther from perfection than heaven is from earth; yea, than the east is distant from the west."[2] Even when we have committed no sin, properly so called, our moral condition by no means corresponds with the requirements of the Divine law, because that Spirit which has revealed itself in all its fulness in Christ does not by nature live in us. "Men," says Wessel,[3] "were in death even before they had fought the fight, inasmuch as they were either liable to fall from grace, or, before being strengthened by it, were living in the mere state of nature, perhaps without any sin which could be imputed to them, but at the same time, without the afflatus of the quickening spirit from on high." In his view men, as they love only themselves, are by nature children of wrath, and it is only by a higher and purer love emanating from Christ that they can become children of God. "We are by nature children of wrath; for even though we have been created for true wisdom, we are yet destitute of it, so long

The notion entertained by Wessel of the *image of God* is limited wholly to the inner man, the spirit, and from the passages in which, on the one hand he represents man as an image of the triune God, and on the other, as likewise an image of Christ, we may perceive that, by the image of God he means the true knowledge of God, inward reverence and ardent love of him, and consequently the higher intellectual nature of man, in so far as its several manifestations are purely exercised upon the most worthy object. Comp. among other passages the Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 389: Sane non corporalis ac exterioris hominis forma Deus homini similatur. Spiritus enim Deus est, et qui adsimiletur, in spiritu oportet adsimiletur. As the Logos, or Christ, is the eternal and perfect image of God, it may also be said that the inner man, (to which alone Wessel restricts the notion of the Divine image,) has been created after the image of Christ. Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 494.

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 388. Salvi non erimus, nisi reformata in nobis imagine et similitudine, ad quam destinati sumus. Hanc Jesus quaerit, veritatem scilicet claritatem et charitatem, quae quando in nobis non sunt, nox nobis est.

[2] De Orat. ii. 2, p. 45. Comp. likewise chap. iii. p. 47, where, among other things, we read, Omnis nostra justitia objectalis est in terris, quae, quoniam formalis non est, vere sicut pannus est menstruatae. The *objectalis* is the justitia so far as it comes to man from without, the *formalis* so far as it proceeds from himself.

[3] De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 9, p. 432.

as we merely are what we are by nature. And so long as we are without wisdom we naturally love ourselves. When, however, this love is left to itself it seeks only its own."[1] Hence, also, in the merely natural man the fear of God prevails—and such a fear as is accompanied with inward pain, and cannot co-exist with confidence and love—a fear to be distinguished "from that reverential awe of his exalted majesty which dwells for ever in the heart, because, with the increase of love, the knowledge of his majesty and the recognition of his dignity proportionally grow."[2] The sum of his convictions is this: In man there is a root of ungodliness or evil. It is situate in what is the opposite of devoted and self-sacrificing love, namely, self-seeking and self-will. If he inquire into the cause of his inward variableness and coldness respecting Divine things, he finds another inclination in his heart, namely, love of self, which produces oblivion and disregard of God and Divine things. "These," says Wessel,[3] "pious men[4] of our times even call self-will *(propriam voluntatem)*. It is the root from which all our barrenness and penury, all our wretchedness and debasement spring, and on account of which we are subject to the wrath of God. It alienates us from Him, and makes us his enemies."

In spite, however, of this apostacy from God by means of self-love, there is still undoubtedly *an original knowledge of God, free self-determination, and a germ of good.* Man is conscious of his affinity to God. He is connected with Him by a bond which can never be wholly dissolved. He has even a natural satisfaction in what is good, and this is stronger in well-disposed minds, and therefore comes more frequently and stirringly into conflict with the bias to evil.[5] The consciousness of God, however, never reaches to full knowledge, nor liberty and natural complacency in what is good, to the effectual volition of Divine things, except when they meet a

[1] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 59, p. 574.

[2] Ibid. p. 575.

[3] De Oratione. i. 2, p. 6.

[4] Religiosi may perhaps be taken in its narrower sense of Monks, and referred to the practical Mystics among the then Monks and Brethren of the Common Lot. In particular, Wessel may have had *Thomas à Kempis* in view.

[5] De Orat. vii. 5, p. 130 and 131.

Divine influence, which we call revelation and redemption. In so far as Wessel's principles relate to knowledge, as an element in the acceptance of Divine things, they have been already developed. Here it only remains for us to look briefly to the element of practice. Wessel assigns to the natural man liberty of option, and consequently the capacity of self-determination, either towards evil or good;[1] but so far from considering this as true liberty, he does not overlook that there is always in it a charm and inclination to the side of evil. "The will in man finds itself in a middle state (it is indifferent, *medio modo se habens*), neither hardened to evil, so that it cannot be turned round, nor so confirmed in good, that it cannot be withdrawn from it, but free to good when it is supported by grace, and inclined to evil when nature is left to herself.[2] Let it not, however, on this account be supposed, that in blessed spirits the will is not free, because it is confirmed in what is good, for in them what it wills, it wills with liberty."[3] Between the natural but inefficacious complacency in good, and the equally natural bias to evil which manifests itself as self-seeking and wilfulness, liberty of option occupies the middle;[4] and hence arises an inward struggle, which can only be brought to an effectual decision by the accession of a higher power of grace. "In the will of man self-determination (arbitrium) is free, and complacency (inclination, complacentia) natural; and although the will is corrupted, still, in accordance with sound knowledge, it has the more complacency in the greater good. From this natural and necessary bias of the will arises a greater, harder, more violent struggle, in the perverse will of him who yet clearly knows what is good. . . . . In him who is stiff-necked and in a wrong frame of mind, the will and desire conspire against the reason. In the man who exercises self-control, the will is in unison with

[1] Man has likewise constantly the power to decide for that which is good, and to guard himself from that which is evil." Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 386: In te est, ut sistas, ut refraenes, ut omni custodia custodias cor tuum.

[2] . . . . ad malum prona natura destituta. I supply from the preceding context the word gratia.

[3] De Orat. vii. 3, p. 128.

[4] . . . Voluntas ex volito bono bona est, et ex volito malo mala est. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 330.

the reason, whereas sensual desire stands in contradiction to it. But that the will of God in us be done upon earth, as it is in heaven, *i.e.*, that the love of God may dwell in our hearts, is something which we cannot attain by natural freedom, but solely by grace, because the love and mercy of God are imparted to us only of his spontaneous goodness."[1]

In this sense, accordingly, Wessel admits the freedom of the will, and the self-determining power of man, but at the same time, his spiritual insufficiency, and need of redeeming and sanctifying grace. Man ought to restore within him the pure *Divine image*, which consists in the perfect knowledge and love of the Divine Being, and an inward harmony of nature with Him.[2] But this he cannot do in his own strength; an image of the Divine life must be held up to His view. The righteousness of man would be to love God perfectly, but this righteousness, as Wessel beautifully says,[3] has taken to itself eagle's wings, and flown away to heaven. This lays the foundation for the *need of redemption*. In his present condition, all that really remains to man is the sense of his poverty, and the desire to receive, as a Divine gift, or see produced and promoted within him by Divine influence, that which he does not find in, and cannot produce from, himself. In this deeply felt want, however, lie the ground and commencement of redemption, for it impels man to lay hold on the salvation offered in Christianity. Two things must always enter as constituents into deliverance,—a sense of the need of it, and a sense of the

[1] De Orat. vii. 6, p. 131 and 132.

[2] The inner man, who is created after the image and similitude of God," says Wessel de Sacram. Euchar. cap. 7, p. 671, "lives when he really is the image and similitude of God. But how can he be so, except by the imitation of him whose image he is? It is, accordingly, necessary in order to his life, that he should imitate and assimilate himself to the Divine Being. No doubt it is impossible to resemble Him in so far as he is the Almighty, the Omniscient, and the Supreme Potentate; and this is not required of us. There is one thing, however, which above every other he desired to shew, and to have believed and extolled respecting himself, and that was his love for man, which went so far as that he gave his only begotten Son for the world." In another passage, de Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 75, p. 609: "It was from the beginning the Divine will respecting man, that he should bear the Divine image, and not attain to salvation, until he had reached this object of the Divine will. Resemblance to God, accordingly, is alone salvation for lost man."

[3] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 307.

benignity and offered succour of the deliverer. The knowledge of self and the knowledge of Christ are the conditions of an interest in the kingdom of God.[1] He who is self-satisfied and imagines himself rich, makes no effort, because he does not know the true riches. "No man can seek riches except he who flies from poverty; but no man can fly from poverty, except he who hates it. As little can any one hate it, but he who thinks meanly of it; nor any one think meanly of it, but he to whom it is known. . . . It is thus a rich nursery of true riches to know the poverty of one's own inner man."[2] In and of itself, no doubt, poverty of spiritual blessings is not desirable, but it is a blessing for a man who is poor to be conscious of, and displeased with, his condition, for otherwise he will make no effort to escape from it.[3] "Poverty," says Wessel,[4] "leads to death, but the knowledge of poverty promises life. And so does the knowledge of frailty and mortality, of sin and misery. For what evils do not misery, unrighteousness, death, frailty, and poverty, bring? If, however, they are discovered in the light of truth, truth, as a skilful artist, turns them into living instruments of salvation. She it is that says, Blessed are the poor, meaning the spiritual poor; Blessed the meek; Blessed they who mourn; Blessed they who hunger and thirst after righteousness; Blessed the merciful. If, therefore, I truly acknowledge my poverty, I have eternal blessedness laid up for me under the surest pledge and guarantee.[5] So says truth, and she will conduct you to the place she has promised, and make you free. The truth, therefore, of poverty, though it truly exist, will yet, if truly known, truly liberate the poor, and deliver them from the workshops of poverty. . . . But what poverty can be worse than to be

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 353.
[2] Ibid. ii. p. 375.
[3] Ibid. iii. p. 404.
[4] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 396.
[5] Wessel speaks to the same effect, Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 359, where, in like manner, a lively recognition of inward poverty is represented as the surest promise, yea, as the first commencement of true riches. The feeling of privation is not even possible without the knowledge, and at least the partial appropriation of the true blessings, (paupertatem meam videre non possum, nisi verarum divitiarum collatione). Hence thorough self-knowledge is, as it were, the covenant-ring of a great King, and not merely a pledge but in itself a blessing.

poor in spiritual blessings? If, therefore, I be spiritually poor, then am I poor indeed. But if I perceive this, then the same truth which has inflicted the wound, comforts me with the word, Blessed are the poor in spirit. But how can I be blessed in poverty so extreme, unless the Pattern of riches so vast, held up to my view, gradually excite, quicken, advance, arm, and attract me to it?"

It is undoubtedly, therefore, Wessel's conviction, that man finds his salvation not through himself but only in the Saviour. "There is no other name given to men," says Wessel,[1] "by which they can be saved; neither any other way to salvation, but Jesus. It is evident, therefore, how salutary it must be to exercise diligent meditation on Jesus, in order that we may be saved by his name. The name of Jesus, however, is nothing else but the knowledge of Him produced in the pious mind *(cum pietate creata notitia Jesu)*." The need of redemption accordingly consists in the conviction, that the image of God is darkened within us, and that we are destitute of true righteousness and perfect love to Him. Whereas redemption consists in the believing intuition and appropriation of the Divine life, which has appeared in Christ, and in the renewal of the Divine image within us by that means.[2]

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2. OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE REDEEMER.

From what has been said, there results, according to the mind of Wessel, the necessity of Divine aid for man, because though free, he is yet weak and divided in himself, and of Divine deliverance from sin and its principle, selfish wilfulness, by means of a pure and lofty love which teaches him to forget himself and gives to his will a firm and vigorous direction towards that which is good. All this is accomplished by the scheme of Christian salvation. In it man finds *redemption*. Redemption, however, can only be under-

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 3. p, 417.

[2] Scal. Medit. iii. p. 389: Reconciliatio haec mea interioris hominis in partibus imaginis et similitudinis reformatio est (et) reparatio.

stood by means of the *Redeemer*, and we can only properly appreciate the views respecting the work of salvation, embraced in Wessel's system, by knowing correctly his principles respecting the person of the Saviour. Here he partly adheres to the received doctrine of the Church, and in so far as he does so; no explication of his thoughts is requisite. Some points, however, assume a peculiar shape in his hands, and these we must bring forward.

(a) The Person of the Saviour.

The point from which Wessel starts is the same as that of the Reformers, namely, the Church's doctrine of the union in the person of Christ, of the perfectly Divine and perfectly human nature. The Divine nature consubstantial with the Father,[1] he fondly and frequently designates as the eternal, creative, and omniscient Word of God, the divine Logos. And not only does he say much that is profound on the incarnation of the Logos, and its relation to human nature, but he also treats in a very original way *the condition of the Logos before its appearance on earth;* its, so to speak, pre-historic existence. In the Logos the image or form of God is expressed from eternity.[2] The Logos is the first and most perfect reflection of God. In Christ (Wessel usually styles him the Lamb) we can behold God as we do the sun in a mirror.[3] This likeness of God is also the highest pattern to all celestial spirits.[4] Not only is the Divine Logos, in virtue of his incarnation, the fountain of blessedness to the souls of fallen men, but even before this incarnation and from all

[1] Patri ergo Verbum hoc consubstantiale est. Imo, ut proprie magis, licet insolito verbo, exprimamus, Deo *condeus* vel *unideus* est. De Oratione vi. 1, p. 107. In another passage he says of Christ: Tua voluntas una cum Patris voluntate dominatur. Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 364.

[2] De Caus. Incarnat. cap. 17, p. 451 and 452. There is no other sensible image of God. De Orat. iii. 10, p. 71.

[3] No doubt the shining is not the sun itself, but yet it is its most express image, expressissima imago. Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 367 and 372. Exempl. iii. p. 391 and 393.

[4] De Caus. Incarnat. cap. 15, p. 448, where among others one thesis runs: Similitudo Dei in Agno summum exemplar est omnibus incolis beatae Hierusalem.

eternity, he was so to all angels, who, no less than men,[1] draw from his Divine fulness. Nay, even the *passion of Jesus* is not merely a temporal thing, endured by him as man, but *an eternal act;* and it may be said that the Lamb was slain from the beginning. Wessel here appeals to Rev. xiii. 8, where mention is made of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and to the designation of Satan (John viii. 44) as a murderer from the beginning; and infers as follows: If Satan is described as a murderer from the beginning, *i.e.*, at a time when there were no men, the expression can only refer to the enmity of the devil against the Son of God, who according to the eternal decree is also Son of Man and the founder of a holy Church; and in consequence of this primal and everlasting war and deadly hatred of Satan to the Son of God, the Son of God is justly designated as the Lamb slain from the beginning.[2] The whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in the Logos, and therefore, irrespective of his incarnation and the obedience which in the human form he paid, he is the object of the most entire complacency to God, in whose eyes his worth is so high and absolute that there is nothing which can be compared to it. Inasmuch, however, as in virtue of the most intimate union, the Divine Logos has also from the first moment hallowed and blessed the soul and nature of man, so does this also possess the same dignity. In God's eyes Christ has an *incomparable superiority* over the whole Church which he has founded and sanctified, and the Church exists much more for his sake than he for its. "It is certain," says Wessel,[3] "that that blessed

[1] In the same passage: Quamdiu beati Seraphim non hoc fonte rigabantur, non eorum beatitudo perfecta.

[2] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 9, p. 430. Ille homicida erat ab initio cum non adhuc creatus esset homo. . . . Si enim homicida ab initio, et Agnus occisus ab origine mundi: igitur quando fuit homicida, in Agnum fuit homicida. With this we must conjoin the passage at the end of the chapter, p. 433, where the hatred of Satan is also described as a general one against all the members of the Divine Head, and the ground of it is thus assigned: Homicida . . . videns et invidens supra se futuro angulari lapidi Domino Jesu, qui omnes filios adducturus erat in gloriam adoptionis filiorum Dei. Huic invidens universa sub capite illo membra persequitur. Et quia in nomine illius Agni universum gregem persequebatur ab initio, ideo recte quoque ab origine Agnus et ab initio mundi occisus dicitur.

[3] De Caus Incarnat. Cap. 7, p. 426.

creature which was taken by the Divine Word into personal fellowship, is not only exalted above all the other creatures, but is likewise so filled with grace, righteousness, and glory, that the fulness of these, taken by itself, weighs more in the judgment of God than the fulness of all the rest together; so that, in fact, that holy soul was more the object of God's love than all the other creatures. And so much was this the case, that were one of two things inevitable, and it behoved either the beloved soul of Christ the Church's head on the one hand, or the body of the Church on the other, to be annihilated, then no one could be so blind in his judgment respecting Divine things as not to know for certain what sentence to pronounce. It is for the sake of the excellency and fulness of grace in Christ, that the Church has been loved and saved by God, not Christ for the sake of the Church. Well-regulated love is always earlier and greater towards the greater good; and therefore it is, that from all eternity God has loved Christ more and sooner than all the rest of the Church; and that Christ was more and sooner predestinated than the rest of the body. Nay, the rest of the body would not have been predestinated at all, had it not been for the dignity of its sacred Head." It is true that the head can as little exist without the body as the body without the head, the bridegroom without the bride as the bride without the bridegroom; for in their union they serve to perfect each other. Still it must be affirmed, that the members exist more for the sake of the head, and the bride for the sake of the bridegroom, than the reverse.[1] "The excellence of the Lamb is greater and more exalted than that of His whole kingdom. . . . . A wise Creator will always appoint the less for the sake of the greater good. . . . Accordingly the whole kingdom of the Lamb exists more for the Lamb's sake than the Lamb for the kingdom's."[2] This infinite superiority of Christ in God's eyes is not, however, based merely upon his perfection and holiness in general, but principally upon the fact that He devoted himself perfectly to God and the Divine love, and lived entirely to God. "There exists no created love to God so great as the first-born love of

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 14, p. 446.

[2] See the Theses de Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 15, p. 448.

the Lamb. . . . The love of the Lamb to God is greater than that of all other holy and blessed creatures."[1]—And in another passage[2] he says, "Christ lived more for God, and His relation to God, than for the salvation of all of us."

Accordingly, Wessel establishes the relation between God and Christ as absolute and intrinsic. It is eternal, perfect in itself, and relatively independent of the institution of the kingdom of God by Christ. In general, he seeks to vindicate for the *Son of God and Man a wholly independent dignity and pre-eminence*, so that he appears in no respect as a mere instrument for purposes of the creatures, but all that he does and suffers has its ground in himself. Here we light upon what is not a new, but certainly a remarkable thought. Even the *incarnation* of the Son of God is not in his view necessitated by the wants of the human race, as an anterior condition, but has an intrinsic ground. The deliverance of the sinful race was but a secondary cause and consequence. The Son of God became man chiefly for His own sake, and would have done so even had there been no fall.[3] Just as little as God is what he is for the sake of the Logos,[4] so little is the Logos what he is for the sake of man. "The Word," says Wessel,[5] "did not become flesh chiefly on my account; but yet he became flesh for my advantage, has been given and destined from all eternity to me and to my love, and all that he is or has assumed is a gift to me. Therefore, as the Word did not become flesh for the flesh's sake, but for its own, so has the word of the flesh which it assumed, also become flesh (*ita verbum adsumtae carnis caro factum est*, meaning, no doubt, that the word, preaching, or doctrine of the incarnate Son of God has taken upon it the finitude of man.) And yet it is the Word in itself, of itself, and for its own sake. With that man (Christ) the Word is united in itself, by itself, and for itself, because among all the creatures he is the one to whom pertain the highest grace, wisdom, righteousness, vision, admiration, and fruition of the eternal God-

[1] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 38, p. 530.

[2] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 15, p. 449.

[3] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 11, p 436. and Cap. 14, p. 445.

[4] Illi igitur carni [the Logos made flesh], *licet non propter illam carnem*, Deus est quicquid est—is affirmed in the passage which we are about to quote.

[5] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 7, p. 428.

head. . . Great caution, therefore, must be used in handling the doctrine of the Nicean Council, which declares, that for us men and our salvation he became man, as if the Word had become man solely for our sakes and otherwise never would. For, among final causes, which are essentially co-ordinate, the order by no means is, that the higher exist for the sake of the lower, as if these were their end and aim. And even though God gives himself to us "he cannot give his glory to another."

This thought of an incarnation of the Son of God, not merely dependent on man and his salvation, but arising from the necessity of his own being, is, as we have said, not new. It is hinted at by *Irenaeus*,[1] more distinctly expressed by *Duns Scotus*,[2] and fully corroborated with reasons in a work by the Franciscan *Caraçoli de Licio*.[3] The chief ground of the more ancient theologians is, that on the one hand, even irrespective of the redemption, the eternal prototype of humanity, as it exists in the Divine mind, required to be realised, and so the Divine image, which was yet imperfect in Adam, to obtain its perfection and completion, and that on the other, the capacity in human nature of entering into personal union with God, also required to be realised.[4] We do not, indeed, find this reason expressed by Wessel. He goes no farther than simply to assert[5] the eternal and absolute necessity of the incarnation of the Logos, and that its connection with the human race, as of the head with the body, and of the corner-stone with the temple, was not first occasioned by sin. But then this involves as its basis, although silently and merely allusively, the notion, that by virtue of the self-established relationship between God and the human race, a perfect exhibition of the Divine in humanity, and of the human in its unity with God, must necessarily ensue, if the object which God originally proposed with the human race was to be realised, and if that which was in the Divine Logos was to be fully developed. And this thought of the necessity of the incarnation of the Logos, or of the manifestation of the God-man, founded in the Divine and

[1] *Dorner* Entwickelungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi s. 57 sq.

[2] Ibid s. 136.

[3] Opus de Laudibus Sanctorum Venet. 1489. Serm. iii.

[4] See *Dorner*, in l. c. s. 58, 133, and especially 138—140.

[5] De Caus. Incarnat. c. 6. See below.

human natures, whose advent no doubt has a redeeming and atoning efficacy when it comes into relation with actually existing sin, is certainly very remarkable, not merely because it afterwards reappears with particular men, among whom *Andr. Osiander*[1] deserves to be chiefly named, but because it has acquired an importance even in modern German theology, which we need not here point out. At the same time, in the whole position which it gives to Christ with reference to the Church, there is a deeply *reformatory* element. Mediæval Catholicism had placed the Church before Christ; here, however, Christ is placed before the Church. Even Wessel, and still more the Reformation after him, recognised Christ once more, as the independent, absolutely authoritative, and all-sufficient Head of the kingdom of God, as the sole centre of all things, as the great Being for whose sake the Church exists, not he for the Church's.

Although he makes the intrinsic necessity of the incarnation prime, and its necessity as conditional to salvation secondary, Wessel is still very far from lowering the importance of the manifestation of Christ for the latter purpose. He discusses the causes of the incarnation in a special work.[2] In this he replies to the question likewise treated by *Anselm of Canterbury* among others, viz., Why did God become man? (*Cur Deus homo?*), and suggests the following reasons:[3] "In order that that sacred and venerable body, the Church universal of triumphant saints, might not be mutilated, but rejoice in its lawful Head—in order that the fabric of the holy temple might have a corner-stone, in which the two walls, *i.e.* angels and men, might be united and established—in order that the whole creation might have a common Mediator between God and itself[4]—in order that the general army and the whole people of God might have their king—in order that the school of God might have its teacher, the

[1] Comp. *Baur* Disquisitio in Andr. *Osiandri* de justif. doctrinam Tub. 1831. *Dorner* Entwickelungsgesch. s. 200.

[2] *De Causis Incarnationis* Libri ii. Opp. p. 414–457.

[3] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 6, p. 424 and 425. The answers of Wessel are proved with a multitude of texts of Scripture, which I here omit.

[4] The assumption by the Logos of the restraints of humanity was likewise necessary, for this end that in their poverty and lowliness men might be able to feel confidence before God, and not be repelled by awe for the Divine Majesty. De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 3, p. 418.

city of Jerusalem its temple, and the temple of the Jerusalem above its high priest—in order that all the daughters of God might have a bridegroom and a pattern of love—in order that all the worshippers in the temple of God might have their sacrifice, all the sheep of his pasture their common shepherd, and all the sons of God and all the creatures, their elder brother." These thoughts are then extended by Wessel, but this general view of them may here suffice.

The statements, which we find, dispersed in Wessel's works, respecting the *Divine and human nature in the person of the Redeemer*, are as follows: The Divine nature in Christ hallows and blesses the human, form the first moment of the incarnation.[1] By virtue of this union of the Divine with the human nature, Christ foresaw all his conflicts and sufferings.[2] In general, the Redeemer is not only wholly filled with the Divine spirit, not only possesses it without measure, but, what principally distinguishes him from all other holy men, he has the Spirit remaining on him, and is always, and in the same uniform way, imbued with it. Wessel appeals to the words of John the Baptist (John i. 33), and says: "It is evident from this that none of the saints possesses the constancy and permanence of the Spirit dwelling in him; because none but Christ, who is both God and man, baptizeth with the Holy Spirit."[3] If in every more noble soul there is some degree of affinity to God, the soul of Christ, in virtue of its perfect purity and devotedness, shews a perfect resemblance to Him: "Every noble mind has in it something Divine, so that it loves to communicate itself. The nobler it is, the more it imitates the Divinity within it. Hence that holy soul is much beloved by God, as it resembled him far above the other creatures, and gave itself wholly for its brethren, in the way God had given himself for it. For although the Holy Ghost is eternal like the Father and the Son, and is, equally with them, God from all eternity, still it was destined as a gift for that

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 17, p. 452. Penes hanc formam [divinam, qua Patri coaequalis est] fuit mox a primo momento incarnationis beatificans adsumtam naturam.

[2] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 38, p. 532. A primo instanti conceptionis in utero matris novit Agnus hoc ingens proelium suis humeris impositum.

[3] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 56, p. 569.

blessed soul, and a gift so full, that of its fulness all the members and partakers receive."[1] The soul of the Redeemer is by Wessel designated as pre-eminently holy,[2] and his human nature as so entirely *free from sin*, and so penetrated with holiness, that it is thereby not only elevated above all other men, but even becomes the source of holiness to all. "His humanity (properly his flesh) is, in fact, replete with holiness, to such a degree that out of his fulness all have received, and all the holy are anointed."[3] Tempted in all things he remained without sin; from all conflicts, within and without, he came forth a conqueror: He is the perfected champion of his people.[4] But notwithstanding this moral power and excellency, He is yet so full of love and gentleness, that he does not reject even the humblest and the most abandoned. "For though He is the holiest of the saints, and really without sin, yet never did he do what he expresses in the well-known words: Cast the stone at any one."[5] In respect of this sanctity, Christ has no equal upon the earth.[6] In like manner His love is infinite and incomparable.[7] Its proximate object is, as it behoved to be, Himself in His purity and excellence. Its second object is mankind, and especially the Church of true believers. These two kinds of love, however, pass into a third which is the highest of all, and to which Christ sacrifices all else, namely, love to God.[8] Hence by his love and holiness, by his compliance in all respects with the Divine will, He is the great pattern for all,[9] and His love and His life have something so affecting as necessarily to kindle in others similar dispositions. So deeply is Wessel penetrated with this truth, that he uses the strong but ingenious expression:[10] "The man unaffected by this pattern does not so much as *exist*." It does not, however, contradict this

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 7, p. 427.
[2] Ibid. Cap. 16, p. 450.
[3] Ibid. Cap. 3, p. 416.
[4] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 34, p. 521.
[5] Ibid. Cap. 52, p. 562.
[6] . . . singularis illa sanctitas, qua non erat ei vir similis in terra. De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 21, p. 495.
[7] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 27, p. 510.
[8] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 24, p. 504.
[9] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 20, p. 492 and 493.
[10] Qui non ab hoc exemplari trahitur, non est. De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 82, p. 627.

supreme perfection of the Saviour, to hold that his development was like that of other men, that he increased in wisdom and the temporal manifestations of love; inasmuch as at the first he did not exercise it, which, however, he did in the sequel; "For it is no more unreasonable to suppose that he thus increased in wisdom, than that he increased in righteousness. He did increase in righteousness, however, in respect that, from a merely intending, he became the actual, offerer of that great sacrifice."[1] What Wessel means to say is this: There was development in Christ, but it merely consisted in that which was originally within him proceeding to a temporal exhibition and issue.

This leads us now to what was the proper work of Christ.

b. The Work of the Redemption and Atonement.[2]

Christ became man in consequence of the intrinsic necessity of his nature and of the original relation between God and man, but he took upon him the form of a servant for the sake of our redemption. The main points of his action as Redeemer are as follows.

Christ is *Redeemer*, even by the *manifestation of the Divine life*. There dwells in him such a fulness of truth, wisdom, love, and righteousness, that all may draw from it and be quickened anew. "To the First-born of every creature, full of grace and truth, the Father has given the Spirit without measure; nay, so largely, that he has been anointed above his fellows with the oil of gladness, and in him dwells all the fulness of wisdom bodily. Of his fulness have we all received. The stream of it suffices to refresh the whole holy city of God and its citizens, because all who are fellows of the Son of the Father, according to a certain gradation, drink of the river that gladdens the city of God, and are anointed with the oil of gladness."[3] In Christ a new, sinless, and fruitful shoot has been raised up; by

[1] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 17, p. 486.

[2] Comp. *Baur* die Christl. Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtl. Entwickelung, Tübingen 1838. s. 276—281.

[3] De Orat. iii. 7, p. 63.

him a perfect fulfilment of the law has been brought in[1]; in him the commandment of love has in all points been fulfilled far above its utmost requirements, so that in every respect we may receive out of his fulness, and need only to admit him into our hearts, in order to have there also the Spirit of the Father, yea, the Father himself, who revealed himself by him.[2]

Christ, however, did more than manifest the Divine life. He is also a *Mediator*, and, as such, smooths the relation between God and man, and between the Divine justice and mercy. "According to the second or servant form," says Wessel, "the Lord Jesus is not only Mediator between God and man, but is rather Mediator for man, between the God of justice and the God of mercy;[3] for it behoved that the whole law of God's justice should be fulfilled without failure of one jot or tittle; and as this has now been achieved by Jesus, it is easy to find the way in which mercy can flow forth in streams of compassion. The wisdom of the Father, however, made this way by the device (artificio) of a Mediator."[4] And in another passage he says,[5] "Among all the miracles not the least is, the same justice which is armed with Divine and eternal laws against man, not only restrains the sword in judgment, but also the sentence, and not only absolves the criminal whom it had determined to condemn, but orders him to be exalted to dignity, honour, and glory. Who is not here surprised to mark how the truth of the threatenings has been changed into the truth of the promises, and upon both sides the truth secured? These things, so contrary to each other, the gentleness of the Lamb alone has blended. For Christ, being himself God, and priest, and sacrifice, has satisfied himself for himself and by himself."[6] In Christ we be-

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 376, where, among other things, we read: Non lege, non mandato praecipit, sed *exemplo* praecessit.

[2] De Orat. ii. 3, p. 47, with which compare de Orat. ix. 2, p. 157, and de Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 8, p. 429.

[3] It is to be observed that Wessel does not say: Between the Divine justice and compassion—but, between a just and a merciful God. This appears to be also connected with his *Nominalism*. See supra p. 301—2.

[4] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 17, p. 453.

[5] De Magnitud. Pass. Cap. 14, p. 480.

[6] Nimirum, ipse Deus, ipse Sacerdos, ipse hostia pro se de se sibi satisfecit.

hold not merely a God reconciled, but what surpasses all belief, the reconciling God (reconciliantem Deum), in respect that, being made man, He himself performs, effects, and produces what his righteousness and his holiness require.[1] Man—as Wessel also represents the matter[2]—had sinned, and become a debtor to God. The bond of justice held him as with an indissoluble chain. He could not be restored without being delivered, and for this a deliverer and redeemer was required. Such Christ proved himself to be; inasmuch as by his perfect obedience he not only redressed the wrong of which men, by their neglects and transgressions, had been guilty,[3] but even performed more than all of them would have performed in eternity, had they continued for ever in the state of innocence. "Hence we may form some faint conjecture, with how glorious a priesthood, how full a sacrifice, how lofty a ministry, he mediated between God and man, seeing that he encountered a justice so strict, so rightfully inflamed and armed against us, and encountered it with such success as to vanquish, appease, and satisfy it. Verily, all the treasures of the wisdom, the knowledge, and the power of God were in him. Verily to him the Spirit was not given in measure. Verily, God was in Christ, and reconciled the world unto himself." The idea of an *expiator* is intimately connected with that of a mediator. Mediation finds place only between contending parties; and as Wessel considers men in their natural condition as children of wrath, it necessarily follows that he must likewise suppose a reconciliation betwixt man and God. This is effected by a *sacrifice*, and it is Christ who offers himself as one of the most sublime and efficacious kind. By this sole oblation, which, in the holy Supper, is continually presented to our

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 391.

[2] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 14, p. 477—479.

[3] It is true that Wessel does not use the expressions *obedientia activa et passiva*, but the notion of the active and passive satisfaction of the Redeemer occurs in a very distinct and peculiar form in his writings. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 544: Pater amans noster te filium ejusdem amantem, vadem, sponsorem, fidejussorem de *satisfaciendo et satispatiendo* super aequum pignus esse voluit pro universa mea praevaricatione et calamitate. Comp. *Baur* christl. Lehre von der Versöhnung s. 280.

view,[1] all others are abolished, and every thing done which is objectively requisite for the salvation of men. "No one," writes Wessel to a Nun,[2] "will ever be saved by his merits, no one by his righteousness. There is only the one sacrifice of the great High Priest, and in as far as we participate in it, just in so far are we sanctified, and in so far of pure heart, but no farther." The essential and transcendent element in this oblation of Christ consisted in its having been offered from a sentiment of the purest obedience, proceeding even to the most painful death, and consequently in its having been not a mere bodily, but the highest species of spiritual oblation. "Of this obedience it is justly said, that it is better than sacrifice, yea, better than all victims, sacrifices, and oblations. For unless the victim here had been of this description, it would not have been calculated to do away the guilt, deceit, and imperfection of our corrupted priesthood. For we have all come short by a profaned and contaminated priesthood, having not merely sacrificed to aal, but withheld from God the victims which were his due. And because this worthy sacrifice of obedience has emancipated us from idolatry, cleansed us from superstition, and restored us to our holy office, it is necessarily preferable to all burnt-offerings, and not a mere oblation for sin, but a sacrifice and a burnt-offering."[3]

No such sacrifice could be offered by Christ without *sufferings* and *death;* and here it is of importance to observe that, unlike most of the *Schoolmen*, Wessel estimates the import and magnitude of Christ's sufferings not extensively, or according to the quantity of pain he endured, but intensively, or according to the strength of the love which animated him, and, as in all other moral matters, applies not a quantitive but a qualitive measure, which is one of the most significant evidences of the spirituality and essentially evangelical character of his mind.[4] The suffering

[1] Comp. *e.g.* de Sacram. Eucharistiae. Cap. 26, p. 699. We shall afterwards say more on this subject.

[2] p. 656.

[3] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 21, p. 497.

[4] *Baur* die christl. Lehre von der Versöhnung s. 278.

of Christ, as Wessel thinks, was even of itself painful; but the inward pain was infinitely heightened by the love which dwelt in his heart. It was this that gave him true susceptibility for mental sufferings, and raised it to the highest pitch. Even Codrus, Decius, and other great men of ancient times, sacrificed their lives for the public good, and yet they were supported by no enlightened insight, no exalted enthusiasm, or certain prospect of future glory, as the Saviour was. It might, therefore, be supposed that their self-sacrifice was a harder and greater act than Christ's. We have here, however, to reflect on the one hand, that the power of the evil one nowhere appears on such a height, or acts with such malignity, as in the conflict with the Saviour;[1] and on the other, that in him there dwelt a love which was of a peculiar kind and felt an infinitely deep sense of all the wickedness, sin, and misery of the human race; so that, in fact, a Divine power was requisite in order to persevere and achieve the victory.[2] "The more," says Wessel,[3] "he loved with a love which no other ever surpassed, the more was his love offended by our miseries, above all that human being ever felt. . . . . Whoever tries to estimate the bitterness of Christ's passion must, first, bring with him an eye exercised in love; secondly, must justly estimate Christ's love to men; thirdly, must consider the magnitude of the devilish malice to which he was given up and surrendered; and finally, must perceive the sweet odour and loveliness of his holy sacrifice."[4] Hence in this conflict the highest power was displayed, and the victory of the Redeemer surpassed all other victories. "From his fulness," says Wessel,[5] "men and angels will receive, and with the fruit of his achievements the land of the living be satisfied to the full. If the power of God ever appeared in any one of his works, it shone in the victory of the cross, which even the holy angels so highly extol, that to the question, Who is the King of glory? some possessed of deeper

[1] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 19, p. 490.
[2] Ibid. p. 491.
[3] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 27, p. 510.
[4] I have given the last words with some abbreviations. Comp. with it also the following 28th chapter, p. 511.
[5] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 19,p. 489.

insight reply, The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.[1] . . . . And as his glory exceeds every other glory, so likewise does the strength displayed in the battle surpass every other strength, and the battle itself every other battle."

The chief question, however, connected with the passion of Christ respects its real import. Wessel regards it, no doubt, as *vicarious*, not, however, merely in an outward juridical way, but always under the condition of vital faith, and the appropriation of the Spirit of Christ. "Christ," says he,[2] "is the resuscitator of all the dead, their deliverer and saviour by his blood, but he is the redeemer and atoner only of men and by the same blood. According to this the priesthood of Christ, must have been predestinated by God in a higher degree, than his kingdom *(regnum)*; for it is more necessary for men to be united to God by a priest, than to be united in peace under a king. The highest sacrifice of this High Priest was therefore the most predestinated." Wessel appeals to the text of Isaiah:[3] He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and then enquires,[4] "What griefs and what sorrows? Are they those which we actually suffer, or are they those which we ought to suffer? This will be more evident if we consider, why it is that griefs and sorrows are inflicted upon us. It is easy to take away griefs and sorrows for which there is no necessitating cause, but so long as such a cause exists within us, griefs and sorrows are, by the eternal and necessary laws of God, our destined portion, although at the moment we may experience neither one nor other. It is a dispensation of mercy that we do not experience at once and at the very moment we commit the sin all the sorrow we deserve, and this sorrow justly due to us, is the sorrow which the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, has truly borne for us and in such measure and degree, as, according to the strict sentence of the Divine justice, was properly reserved for all the sins of all those whom by his grief and sorrow he has redeemed from death."

[1] Ps. xxiv. 8.

[2] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 9, p. 431 and 432.

[3] Chap. liii. 4.

[4] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 10, p. 469 and 470.

We have observed that Wessel conceived this substitution, not merely as an outward transference, but as morally brought about, in the case of every individual, by an inward appropriation of the life and spirit of Christ; and this appears from the following expressions.[1] "The Mediator between God and man, the Lamb of God, taketh away the sins of the world, only for them who take up his cross and follow him. . . . The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, is a sign set upon a hill to be seen of all nations. . . . The sign set upon a hill is the model of that spiritual building which was shown upon the Mount. . . A model, however, which is not imitated is useless, like shoes which are never worn. . . . . The model exalted above the earth, and displayed upon the hill, has drawn all to it. . . . . He who is not attracted by it cannot be said to exist."[2]

In virtue of the importance which Wessel assigned to the *sufferings* and *death* of the Saviour, it behoved him to regard both as also necessary, and *as founded on an eternal divine decree.* "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?[3] If there did exist such an obligation, I ask on what necessity it was founded? Was it merely that of the absolute will of God? or was it that of God's conditional will, as willing that which was right, seemly, expedient, and useful, for his kingdom, in order to complete and restore, adorn and glorify it? It was the latter, as appears from the fact, that it behoved

[1] De Magnitud. Passionis, Cap. 82, p. 627. I here select only a few from a whole series of propositions which relate to the redemption, and especially to the effects of the suffering and death of Christ. The rest, which may be found in l. c. p. 625—629, Cap. 82—84, are some of them also beautiful and striking (*e. g.*, The tree of life will be allotted to no indolent husbandman—A slothful man, who has no fire, cannot dwell with consuming fire—Jesus is the way to life—No one comes to Jesus except through Jesus, and by his appointed way, &c.) They are often, however, so fanciful that they may here be well omitted.

[2] We may thus express the following series of thoughts in the sense of Wessel: Only faith partakes of the salvation of Christ; Faith, however, is inconceivable without love, and with love a fellowship of life, a conformity of life and spirit, is always connected: Impossibile enim amari et non conformari aut imitari; quanto autem imitatur, tanto a veteri homine immutatur. Scal. Meditat. Exempl. i. p. 346.

[3] Luke xxiv. 26.

the King of glory to enter in a glorious way into his glorious kingdom, which is the kingdom of love. The kingdom of heaven is obviously the kingdom of love. It behoved, therefore, the King himself to exercise love in its utmost height. Nothing, however, glorifies a lover so much as suffering great things for his friends. The greatest of lovers, therefore, cannot enter into the greatest glory unless by doing and suffering the greatest things. And hence it behoved him through sufferings to enter into his glory."[1] Wessel gives another and peculiar point of view for the necessity of the sufferings of Christ, suggested by his idea of the New Testament. "A testament," he says,[2] "is the gift of a party still living; but it comes into force only by his death. The words of God's testament are accordingly God's words as a testator, and if he have not vainly and ineffectually made a testament, it was necessary for him to die. And how shall God die except in Christ?" In this way, according to Wessel's conviction, the sufferings of Christ were of intrinsic necessity, founded on the will of God and the nature of his kingdom; and yet, at the same time, they were undertaken by the Saviour with perfect *freedom*, and from pure *love*. "For if the Saviour had suffered merely from necessity, and not from love, he would not

[1] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. i. 457 and 458.

[2] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 15, p. 482. The following propositions, de Magnit. Pass. Cap. 82, p. 628, likewise express the same thought: Non est salus et vita absque morte testatoris. Testator nisi exaltatus a terra testamentum non condit. Testator exaltatus a terra ipse est ipsum testamentum. Testator exaltatus a terra desiderio testamenti sui trahit omnia ad se. The thought occurs also in other passages of Wessel's works; and appears, therefore, not to be so accidental and occasional, but deeply rooted in his whole system of thought. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 344, and Exempl. ii. p. 378. These two passages, which are almost verbal parallels, express the following thoughts: God could not die; but just as little was it possible for him to lie; and yet he had promised to institute a new covenant, and to make a testament: A covenant, however, is consecrated by blood and sacrifice, and a testament comes into force only after the death of the testator. In order, therefore, to fulfil his promises, it behoved God to assume our nature; for he could not die in his own, but only in ours. For that reason, also, he could not take upon him the form of angels, for out of these, too, no mortal being could be formed. As man, it was possible for him to die, and yet, as God, he continued unimpaired, possessed power over death, could take up his life again, and even by his resurrection confirm his everlasting testament.

have suffered as Lord: because it is impossible for one to be Lord (in the highest sense) and also to suffer from necessity. It behoved him either not to be Lord, or not to suffer, or if he suffered as Lord to suffer from love."[1] In connection with the idea of the necessity of Christ's manifestation, Wessel proposes the question, Whether it is conceivable without man's fall and corruption? He replies in the main as follows:[2] It may be said that a Saviour was only necessary for the fallen, and consequently, that if the appearing of the Saviour was necessary, so also was the entrance of sin. To this, however, it may also be replied: He might be a Saviour and Redeemer, even though he only preserved from sin and a threatened fall, and he was so all the more, the more safely the objects of salvation were kept from ruin. In this sense he is most of all a Saviour for Mary, inasmuch as he saved her not only from actual, but also from original sin; in this sense he is a Saviour even for the angels, inasmuch as his action tends to prevent their falling into sin, and to perfect them in the Divine life. In fact, however, if all had alike persevered in good, no one would have been so pre-eminent in the kingdom of good, as to have become its founder and sovereign.[3]

Wessel always conceives Christ's *work of redemption*, in an *intelligent* and *lively* way, and what is as important, he contemplates it always *in its totality* and whole compass, without giving exclusive prominence to any particular part. His lively method of conceiving it, might be shewn in various passages. I will here adduce but one: "It is not," he says,[4] "the flesh of Christ which justifies, nor yet his blood; but his work, which is offered to us in these. And this is the reason why the Lord says, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.' The meaning is, The flesh, however holy it may be, is of small importance; but the magnitude of the work, the ineffable love and affection of him who offers it by the Holy Spirit, is that which quickens." Again, how constantly he keeps in view the totality

[1] Scala Meditat. ii. 22, p. 241.

[2] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 8, p. 429.

[3] De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 15, p. 447, where among others, one proposition says: Si omnes perstitissent, nullus eorum fuisset rex perfectus.

[4] De Oratione viii. 6, p. 147.

of the work of Christ, appears from this, that he does not partially insist upon his passion and death, but urges with equal force, the whole circumstances[1] of his life, the doctrine he taught, and the Spirit emanating from him in the eternal world, as powers of salvation, and points with peculiar emphasis to the fact, that the Holy Spirit could not be shed forth until the perfect completion of his work. The latter point deserves a somewhat more exact explication. From the words of John,[2] "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified," Wessel infers not merely[3] that they who lived under the law of the Old Testament, in spite of the spiritual communications made to them by the prophets, had not yet received the Holy Ghost in the highest sense and fullest measure, but likewise, that the Spirit could not be given even to the Apostles and believers until Christ had finished his work and been exalted into glory. "For how could they draw from his fulness, ere they had yet beheld him in it? How could they celebrate the plenitude of his glory, when they did not yet behold him glorified? And even though they might derive joy from the blessed expectation of him, still their rejoicing was but on his account, and did not proceed from him; and was inconsiderable, when compared with the joy shed upon the whole city of God, when he filled them all with so great an overflow of glory."[4] Nay, in accordance with the conviction to which we have already alluded, that the Divine Word which God has uttered forth into the creation, will not appear in its boundless perfection until the end of all things, Wessel expresses his belief that the full outpouring of the Spirit will only ensue when the work of Christ shall have reached its final and supreme completion, and Christ himself the perfection of his glory. At that time, "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, the creature will be so exalted to God, that God rather will be all in all; then, likewise, in the final and everlasting

[1] Natus nobis, vixisti nobis; nobis passus, nobis mortuus, nobis resurrexisti; pro nobis sacerdos, nostra hostia, nostra victima, nostrum sacrificium. Seal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 405.

[2] John vii. 39.

[3] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 12, p. 437—440.

[4] In l. c. p. 439 and 440.

glorification, will the Holy Spirit be given so fully, that one might almost say he had never before been given at all."[1]

As respects the *compass of the work of Christ*, and the universality or particularity of the Divine decree which he executed, Wessel expresses himself only in a relative manner, sometimes conceiving the redemption universal, and sometimes also limited. In the first place, so universal does he conceive it as not even to exclude the spirits who are superior to the race of man. "Christ is a priest to all eternity.[2] But to whom could he be so unless to the eternal people of God? The people of God, however, consist of all the citizens of the blessed kingdom, angels no less than men. He is, therefore, likewise the priest of the angels to all eternity. . . . . In virtue of his double priesthood, Christ was the angels' priest and also their meat-offering, alike by the priesthood which he exercised in the sacrifice of the cross, and by that which he exercises in eternity. The first is the priesthood of eternal righteousness; the second, the priesthood of perfect bliss. My belief is, that as the priesthood of Christ kindled the Seraphim to a loftier blessedness, so also was the righteousness in heaven incomplete in love to Jesus, until after the high priest had finished his sacrifice of love, and the example set before them had inflamed their love the more, the greater it had previously been. In this way the holy angels increased in two essential things,[3] in righteousness and felicity." However far Wessel here extends the saving and priestly action of Christ, still in the case of man he limits it to those who subject themselves to his sway, actually enter through him into fellowship with God, walk in his light, and conquer under his lead.[4] No doubt Christ has suffered on the cross for all; but of the benefits of his passion and death every man obtains only so much as he has capacity to receive. The susceptibility, however, is regulated by the degree of his inward purity and conformity to Christ.[5]

[1] In l. c. p. 438.

[2] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 10. p. 434.

[3] Compare with this the commencement of chapter x. p. 433, chap. viij p. 429, and chap. xiv. p. 444.

[4] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 9, p. 432 and 433.

[5] Christus pro singulis salvandis tantum Deo obtulit, quantum pro illius voluit abolitione. Voluit autem, quantum apti. Apti autem,

Such, in substance, is what we have to say respecting the objective fundamentals of salvation: It now remains likewise to shew what were Wessel's views respecting the subjective appropriation of it by the individual.

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3. ON THE APPROPRIATION OF THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

We have here to exhibit the practical aspect of Christianity as conceived by Wessel, and in particular the leading articles of justification, faith, love, and the influences of the example of Christ. As these doctrines, especially that of justification and faith, constitute the central point of the theology of the Reformation, it is here in particular that Wessel will present himself to our view as its *precursor*.

The proper kernel of the Reformation is still the *doctrine of justification*, in other words, the conviction that the only ground of salvation is laid by Christ in the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins, that the sole means of appropriating this free love of God is living faith, and that this faith naturally produces a new life of devotedness to Him. The prominence and weight which they assigned on all hands to this principle was likewise, in the main, the new feature in the labours of the Reformers; for almost every other object for which they strove already existed, and now only derived an unusual efficacy by being brought into inward connection with this heart and central point. Already for a long time, and in the most vigorous way, the negative aspect of the Reformation, namely, opposition to the papacy and all the ramifications of the hierarchical system of the Church, had obtained. Many like-

quantum mundi et conformes Christo. Intentio enim Christi fuit individua, quia solis praedestinatis; et limitata, quia praecise tantum, quantum cuique in suum locum et ordinem. Christus etiam in cruce non solum pro omnibus, verum etiam pro singulis proprias cuique suas mensuras donavit, ut quisque salvandus propriam illic suam amaritudinis pro se perpessae assem ex libra reperiat. De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 10, p. 471.

wise, as for instance the *Waldenses* and *Wickliffe*, and quite recently *Goch* and *Wesel*, had enunciated the formal positive principle of the Reformers, viz., the reference of all doctrines, and institutions to the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate rule of Christianity. But the material positive principle, the article of *justification* and *salvation by faith* alone, had not yet been so strongly, luminously, and fully declared, as by *Luther* and his compeers. Among the men, however, who on this side paved the way for them, *Wessel* no doubt takes the lead, for by none of the great theologians, or Christian sects of the middle age, was the principle of faith recognised and expressed so fully in the spirit of the Reformers as by him. On this side, also, he is a far more decided precursor of Luther and the rest than many to whom that name is usually given.

The most pious mediæval divines did not here penetrate to the central point of the doctrines which the Apostle Paul, in his deep and lively intuition of the work of Christ, had promulgated. They were all more or less restrained by Pelagian principles. Even among the *Waldenses* we by no means find the perfectly free and child-like spirit of the Gospel. Their religious life has a certain tincture of legality and righteousness by works, which, no doubt, in practice is simpler and purer than that of the dominant Church, but in principle is not so very different as is customary to suppose.[1] *Gerhard Groot* himself and the

[1] This is very clearly expressed in a document, which undoubtedly reflects in a faithful and unvarnished manner the original and pure spirit of the *Waldenses*. I speak of the *Nobla Leyczon*, a poetical production of the Waldenses from the 12th century, printed in *Rayouard* Choix des Poésies des Troubadours, Paris 1817. Tom. ii. p. 73—102. Here, at the commencement, there is an exhortation (p. 7) to watchfulness, to prayer, and to good works (de bonas obras far), because the end of the world is near. Great stress is laid (p. 74) on retribution by Christ, the punishment of the wicked and the rewarding of the good:

Un chascun recebre per entier pajament,
E aquilh que auren fait mal e que auren fait ben.

In general, it is the moral aspect of Christianity and its ethical precepts which are inculcated (p. 78, 87, 88, 89, 90.) Waldensians are (p. 95) designated as persons who take special pains to observe these precepts, and the Gospel itself is (p. 89, v. 265) delineated only under the aspect of a law:

Co es la *ley* novella que Yeshu Christ a dit que nos deven tenir—

Brethren of the Common Lot, in spite of their internalism, and devotedness to God and Christ, always recognised some meritoriousness in human works. The pious *Thomas à Kempis*, in his biographies of the Brethren and other writings, speaks not unfrequently of meriting salvation, and has not kept even the Imitation of Christ itself perfectly untainted by this thought.[1] Even by *Goch* and *Wesel*, we do not find the idea of justification by faith placed in the foreground and centre, at least so much as by *Wessel*. In these men, especially the Brethren of the Common Lot, the principles of Monachism which governed the middle age, and the traditional doctrines regarding the meritoriousness of

As such, and differing from it only as more perfect, it is placed side by side with the moral law in the reason, and in the Old Testament. (p. 99, v. 439—453). The forgiveness of sins, it is true, is derived from God alone, and authority to forgive them denied to belong to Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, and Preachers (p. 97, v. 409—413), but special works of penitence are required from the repentant sinner, and these of an outward kind, *e.g.*, fastings, almsgivings, and prayers, (p. 98, and especially v. 420—421). It was also congenial with this whole tendency of the Waldensians to prefer the Sermon on the Mount before any other part of the New Testament (p. 88 and 89), to endeavour to imitate the life of the Apostles even in externals; in which respect they were not free from a certain degree of methodism.

[1] As regards *Thomas*, see my remarks, supra p. 132. As respects *Gerhard Groot*, I appeal to the testimony of a theologian who has instituted the most minute inquiry respecting him of any in modern times. I allude to Professor J. *Clarisse*, the elder. This author observes in an essay commenced by his son, and after his premature death, finished by himself, over den Geest en de Denkvijze van *Geert Groot* im kirchenhist. Archiv von *Kist* und *Royaards* Th. 2, St. 1, s. 303, that in Gerhard *Groot*, in spite of his acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and his deep-toned piety, a legal more than evangelical frame of mind comes to view: Zekerlijk was hij, ten aanziene van de hoofd-en grondleer des Christelijken geloofs, de regtvaardiging des zondaars om niet, zonder de werken, uit de Goddelijke Genade in Christus geschonken en vertrouwelijk op de Evangeliegetuigenis aan te nemen, en met wederliefde en dankbaarheid, vruchtbaar in heiligheid en geregtigheid, te beantwoorden;—ik erken, ten aanziene van deze stond hij niet hooger dan zijne voortreffelijkste tijdgenooten, die alle met het euvel der werkheiligheid besmet waren. Van het stil en kinderlijk vertrouwen op de vergevende liefde des Hemelschen Vaters, op grond der verdiensten des eenigen Verlossers en van een nederig en ootmoedig geloof, dat afziet van alle eigene verdienste en waardigheid, om alleen door onverdiende gunst tijdelijk en eeuwig behouden te worden;—daarvan vindt men weinig of niets bij hem.

good works, interwoven with the whole ecclesiastical system, were still too deeply rooted to render it possible for them to soar to the full height and freedom of the Christian intuitions of a Paul. This was only practicable, as the consequence of a complete inversion of principles, and revolution in the sphere of religious life; —a work to which *Luther*, by the whole inward training of his mind, and the outward circumstances in which he was placed, was specially called. Besides, he possessed courageous faith and noble-minded Christian boldness sufficient to commit himself solely to the grace of God, and without the frail rudder of human works, to venture upon the sea of the divine love. If any one immediately before him had dared the voyage, it was, as we have now more particularly to shew, the subject of our memoir; and he did it,

First, in the doctrine of *Justification*. It is for *Wessel* a fixed and certain truth, that by the *fulfilment* of the *law* man cannot possibly attain to true salvation, partly because the law itself has in it a degree of imperfection, partly because man never wholly does, nor even can, wholly fulfil it. "He who believes that he shall be justified by his works," says Wessel,[1] "knows not what righteousness is. To be righteous is to give to every one his own; but what man has ever succeeded in comporting himself towards God as it was his duty to do? or in being to every man what it was his duty to be? Such a person knows not the extent of his obligation, nor the magnitude of the blessings which the future unfolds and to which no works can ever be equivalent. Nor is it merely by ignorance that he errs, but he commits sacrilege by ascribing the praise of justification, not to God, but to himself. On the other hand, whosoever, on hearing the Gospel, believes, and longs, and hopes, and with confidence embraces it as a joyful message, and loves the Justifier and Saviour whom it proclaims, and, in order to win him, does and suffers all things, extols thereby not *his own* works nor himself as the doer of them, but by his longing and devotion for Him whom he loves, on whom his faith, desire, hope, and confidence, are placed, and by whom he is justified, ascribes nothing to himself, well knowing that he has nothing of himself.

[1] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 46, p. 553.

He knows therefore that, as he possesses nothing which he has not received, he has no ground to boast of his own things, as if he had not received them, but ought to boast only of him by whom they were conferred." It is not, however, owing merely to the insufficiency of man, but also to the nature of the *law*, that no one can be saved by its means. This Wessel immediately proceeds to explain in the following passage,[1] "Righteousness is the aim of the law; for if the law, when observed, does not make the observer righteous, it is no law. Its right to bear the name of law depends on its justifying the observer. This, however, was impossible to the law of Moses, because it prescribed impossible things. For, although what it prescribed was no doubt perfectly equitable for man, namely, that man should love God with all his heart, it was nevertheless impracticable. It was in fact a heavy yoke upon the shoulder, which neither the Apostles nor their forefathers, were able to bear. The law inculcated perfection, but it did not conduct us to the perfect. How then? Has the Gospel done so? It has. And whom has it conducted? Every one who *believes;* for to every one who believes, Christ is the end and fruit of the law for righteousness, because it is he who gives to all who believe in his name power to become sons of God. By faith in the Word they connect themselves with the Word. The Word is God, with whom accordingly faith connects them. But it is good to be thus connected with God; because whoever is so, becomes one spirit with Him, righteous with the Righteous One, and holy with the Holy. But Abraham also believed, and consequently he also was conducted to the perfect; and the prophets believed? Doubtless they did, but upon One who was yet to come, and had yet to offer the sacrifice of perfect righteousness. . . . They were enabled to cherish a faithful hope, but they could not receive that which did not as yet exist. They ate the same spiritual food with us,—they in hope, as a food that would one day be given to them; we eat it in reality, as a food which has been already given." Consequently it is not the works which are produced by the law, but it is the *faith* springing from the Gospel, which possesses the power of justifying in the sight of God. Nor is it, that faith possesses in

[1] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 47, p. 555.

.tself the worth justly ascribed to the perfectly pure and holy minds of loftier Spirits,[1] but it is, that God has been pleased to impart to believers a higher righteousness than that of the angels.

This leads us more distinctly to Wessel's positive doctrine respecting justification and its *objective* basis. His views on this point are developed especially in the work *on the Magnitude of the Sufferings of Christ*;[3] where we find among others the following passages:[4] "Respecting justification, it is clear that to have sin taken away, is nothing else than to possess justifying love;[5] for he who is destitute of this continues in sin. In order that Christ may take sin away, it is requisite that he infuse (*infundat*) righteousness. Accordingly, even in the humanity which he assumed, he possesses casual efficacy for the justification of the ungodly, and for securing to them grace and wisdom, discernment and love, progress unto perfection, and consummation when perfected, that is, eternal felicity. This is the substance of the promise made to him in Isaiah,[6] 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days'—for the seed has within it a causal efficacy. I do

[1] Wessel never considers *faith* as the actually *operative cause* of salvation. This he finds only in Christ and the divine word manifested in him. In the smaller work de Magnit. Passion. in the Farrago rer. theol. p. 746, he says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you, not through the word of your faith or your confession, although you are clean if you have the word of faith in your heart and the word of confession in your mouth; for it is *by faith* that he purifies the heart of believers, not, however, *for faith's sake*, but for the sake of the word which actuates the man."

[2] De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 45, p. 551.

[3] De Dispensatione Verbi incarnati et *Magnitudine Passionis*, Quae fuit necessitas Christo pati: quomodo oportuit Christum patiendo, et qua gloria intrare in gloriam suam. The work in the Gröningen edition occupies from p. 457—643.

[4] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 7, and 8, p. 466. and 467.

[5] . . . Nihil aliud est, peccata tolli, quam justificantem charitatem habere. Comp. De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 83. p. 628: Profecto thesaurus noster super omnia est exaltatus: sed quamdiu super omnia eum non amaverimus, non est exaltatum nomen ejus in nobis super omnia. As love is not so much the cause, as rather the vital effect and accompanying measure of justification, so is it also the measure of future blessedness, which cannot be conceived without it. Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 406.

[6] Is. liii. 10.

not mean that which is primal, and which in all things God reserves to himself; but I mean that which the ever-blessed Father possesses in the beloved Son. And this is the name which God has given to the Lamb above every other name, that that holy humanity may not only take away the sins of the world, but effectually implement whatever is imperfect in the whole universe, among angels as well as men ;[1] so that out of his fulness, as from the sole fountain in creation, we may all receive; and that the bright vision, adoration, and blessed fruition of the celestial world, as it emanates ultimately from God, may indirectly depend upon the humanity of Christ as its efficient cause. For, as I believe, it is not without reason that he is called the Father of the world to come.[2] . . . . The sacrifice[3] of the Lord Jesus was not merely for the remission of the sin committed by the transgression of the Divine law; because it is not possible that a sacrifice can be offered for a sin that is past. For if the sin is forgiven, it ceases to be; and if sin ceases, righteousness begins; just as health commences, when sickness terminates, and life when death departs. Every oblation for sin is consequently likewise on oblation for righteousness; and in as far as it is an oblation for righteousness and life, in so far is it a food and sweet nutriment, though more, perhaps, for one and less for another, according to the degrees of righteousness, in order to the communication of which the high priest has offered it to God. The sacrifice is offered to God, but they eat it in whose behalf it is offered."

Wessel's view, taken in connection with the passages formerly quoted, may be summarily expressed in the following propositions: The law can never perfectly justify or save us; because we do not fulfil it, nay, are not even able to fulfil it, in respect that it requires what is impossible. All it does, therefore, is to excite a desire which the Gospel afterwards satisfies. By Christ, his life, sufferings, and death, we are justified before

[1] . . . ut omnem totius mundi inconsummationem tam in angelis quam hominibus efficienter impleat. Comp. De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 14, p. 444.

[2] . . . futuri seculi Pater. Is. ix. 6. English Bible, "everlasting Father." Here its meaning is, author of a new and spiritual creation which extends into the infinite.

[3] Cap. 8, p. 467.

God, *i.e.*, we obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal blessedness. Of this blessedness the supreme and ultimate cause is seated in God; but the proximate and efficient, in the work of Christ. In his whole manifestation as the God-man, there dwelt an inexhaustible and incessantly active power to redeem, sanctify, and save. By means of his pure and holy life our imperfection in the sight of God is made up; by his passion and death our sin and its consequences are taken away. With the abolition of sin and death, however, the introduction of righteousness and life must always be connected. Christ takes away sin, and supplies the want of those only who believe on him. To believe, however, means to enter into connexion and fellowship with him, and whoever enters into fellowship with Christ, enters likewise into fellowship with God; and into all who do so the Spirit of God, and consequently the Spirit of righteousness, holiness, and love, is transfused. Only in as far as we possess within us justifying love, and true righteousness and holiness, only in so far as we actually receive from the inexhaustible fulness of Christ, are we actually treated as righteous, and obtain salvation from God. This love and righteousness, however, is not a thing of our own making, or of our own desert, a work of obedience to the law, but a thing conferred upon us by Christ, a gift of grace, a free product of the quickening power of his Gospel.[1] In this sense the sufferings and death of Christ are called a sacrifice; they are an oblation to God for the sins of man. At the same time, however, they are also a spiritual food for man him-

[1] Wessel is far from considering salvation as in any way procured by desert. He distinctly expresses the contrary opinion, de Commun. Sanctor. p. 816, Propos. 18, as follows: "We are all the paupers of One who is rich, restored by his merit, and reconciled by his obedience; and he is One who holds his place, not by merit, but hereditary right. The recompence of his pains and service, however, he has transferred to us, so that we are redeemed and accepted citizens under a hereditary King, who is the sole master and bestower of the kingdom and its royal dignities. For neither is he who planteth, anything nor he who watereth, but it is God that giveth the increase." To the same effect, addressing God, de Provid. p. 732, he says: "Hast not thou, O God, subjected the creature to infirmity, in order that none may come *to Thee* except *by thyself*? for no one cometh to the Father but by the Son, and no one can come to the Son except the Father draw him, neither can any one call Jesus Lord, except by the Holy Ghost."

self; and only in so far as he appropriates them by faith and love can they be really efficacious in quickening and blessing him. This view—the appropriation of the saving influence of Christ, by means of faith and love—we have now more particularly to contemplate.

Faith, as the first means of laying hold of the righteousness and salvation of Christ, is, of course, according to the notion of Wessel, not a mere taking for granted of historical facts, but the elevation of the whole mind to fellowship with God and the Saviour. It is the substance and ground of the whole higher life, which, as it relates to eternal things, is undergoing a perpetual evolution, refinement, and exaltation. Faith is the organ by which we eat the spiritual food of God's word. Accordingly it has by nature a quickening principle in it. And between it and that which is offered to it, there exists a harmony which God himself has ordained, and which is similar to that between the organs of man and their objects; "For he who planted the ear, and formed the eye, is also the maker of faith. And as he satisfies and delights the ear with songs and harmony, and the eye with light and variety of colours, so will he also take means, that he whom he judges worthy of faith shall be satisfied, quickened, nurtured, strengthened, perfected, enlightened, kindled, and inflamed by his word, and thus exalted to love and life with Himself; that so there may be an eternal, indissoluble, and blessed fellowship between faith and the word, like that which subsists between the youth and the virgin."[1] Faith is in general the basis of the higher life, no less in the relation of man to man, than in that of man to God. "The social relations of man in their whole extent (humani convictus)," says Wessel,[2] "emanate from faith as their only source; for no one man *knows* the other with whom he converses, but merely *trusts* him; and faith (trust) is the bond of human fellowship, in the communication both of good and of evil. In virtue of a just sentence of the Creator, and as the consequence of our credulity in listening to that liar (God's enemy as well as ours) who said: 'Your eyes shall be opened,' —we have been brought under this necessity of believing." In

[1] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 70, p. 597. Comp. Cap. 68, p. 592.
[2] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 70, p. 595.

thus conceiving faith as the higher and nobler confidence exercised by man in all the relations of life, up to the most exalted in which he can be placed, namely, his relation to God, he could not but, on the one hand, regard steadfastness, perseverance, fidelity, and *consistency*, as its necessary elements. For we can only rely on one whom we regard as faithful and trustworthy, nor would our trust deserve the name, if it did not, under all circumstances, manifest its truth and ability to stand the test.[1] On the other hand, however, he looks just as little upon faith as a thing once for all finished and complete, but rather as a thing which, from its connection with the whole inward life, germinates and grows, and is *in a constant course of evolution*. Incipient faith is small and weak, and proceeds through the several advancing stages of human life, till it reaches the ripeness of manhood. "As there is a certain succession in the stages of human life, so likewise faith is first a child; next, when it is equipped with hope and gains a higher confidence, it becomes a virgin; finally, however, it is converted into love, when the believer disdains every other affection save that which is fixed upon the highest object."[2] At the same time, it has also in its very nature a germ of eternity, that is to say, the rudiments of an indestructible and everlasting development of the mind in which it dwells, and, no less, of an immeasurable and unceasing influence upon and propagation into the minds of others. "It is not surprising," says Wessel,[3] "that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, should be compared to a mustard-seed; because the substance of the things hoped for is a kingdom, and one truly such, and consequently a heavenly kingdom, yea, the kingdom of God. For a mustard-seed, and in general seed of every sort, if sound and vital, possesses the power of propagating its species and original kind. The power of propagation, however, has an

[1] De Sacramento Eucharist. Cap. 8, p. 674: Omnes linguae fidem et fidelem germanis cognatarum rerum nominibus designant. Latinus fidelem a fide, Graecus πιστὸν a πίστει. Similiter Italus, Gallus, Germanus, ubi linguarum suarum puritates examinantur. Quid hoc aliud insinuat, quam ut fidelis sit, qui fidem se habere asserit? ut, si fidelis non sit, fidem non habeat. And then further: Nemo enim credere potest cuiquam, quem non fidelem deputat.

[2] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 68, p. 591.

[3] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 61, p. 578.

eternal quality.[1] . . . A single mustard-seed, were its fecundity not restrained, and were it always sown upon a good soil, might in the course of a hundred years fill heaven and earth. We need not, therefore, be surprised that the Lord Jesus compares to such a seed the faith of the saints;[2] for, as the faith of the saints is vital, it possesses an everlasting power of propagation, and is pregnant with an incomprehensible immensity."[3]

Consistently with all his views, Wessel cannot conceive any other than a *living faith*, such as likewise becomes a higher moral principle of life, and, as the bond of fellowship with God in Christ, purifies a man from sin, and progressively sanctifies him. Whosoever is born of God does not sin; but he is born of God who believes in the manifestation of the divine life in Christ, full of grace and truth; for by faith the incarnate Word of God itself dwells in him.[4] In referring justification on the part of man to faith, but at the same time ignoring every other faith save that which worketh by love, Wessel resolves the apparent *contradiction between the Apostles Paul and James* into a mere difference of view, proceeding from a oneness of spirit which has a deeper seat. He expresses himself upon the subject as follows:[5] "We believe both that a man is justified by faith in Jesus Christ, without works; and that faith without works is dead. These, which are severally the doctrines of Paul and James, are different, but not contradictory. Common to both is the persuasion that the just shall live by faith. But the faith meant is that which worketh by love. It is by works that the body shows itself alive; if these are not performed, it is looked upon as dead; and were a man to exercise none of the vital functions of the body, such as breathing, pulsation, warmth of heart, he would at once be reckoned lifeless. But although it is by the exercise of these functions that

[1] It includes within it an eternity—habet et foecunditas aeternitatem.

[2] Matth. xvii. 20. Comp. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 350: Putasne ut ex tantillo grano sinapis parvulae hujus meae fidei tantum aliquando fulgur erumpet?

[3] . . . incomprehensibili quadam interim praegnat immensitate.

[4] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 3, p. 418.

[5] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 45, p. 550 and 551.

we judge him to be alive; it is not by their exercise that he lives. He lives by that which is their source, namely, the soul *(anima*, the vital principle); and the more, the greater, and the nobler, the functions are which he endeavours to elicit from himself, the more does he live. Inasmuch, however, as of all functions love is the noblest, so in this pilgrimage, the life of the lover is the most desirable, even although he sits with folded hands, and does not, like Martha, occupy himself with outward business, but, like Mary, only sees and tastes how good the Lord is,—the better part which she chose and which was never to be taken from her. For no service is pleasing to the lover unless when it springs from love as its source. Love, accordingly, is preferred above all duty and service. But as the source of love is faith, so is faith also acceptable for the sake of its offspring." Having then observed that, conjoined with love, as the fruit of faith, there is a longing after its object, by means of which and of the quickening influence of grace, faith itself cannot but continually grow, Wessel proceeds: "These are the effects, formal or objective, respecting which the Apostle *James* declares that, when they are wanting, faith is wholly unfruitful, yea, wholly dead. There is nothing, however, contradictory to this in the statement of Paul; that only more openly praises and explains the grace of God. On this matter, we ought also to be aware, that there is a twofold righteousness, one which is our own, and which, by virtue of the rectitude *(ex rectitudine)* and integrity of the agent, has nothing displeasing or contrary to the Divine law. Such is the righteousness in virtue of which the angels are justified, as men also would have been, had they retained their original integrity. Now, however, that by transgression they have plunged from fall into fall, a rectitude and integrity of that sort are impossible for man; so that he cannot by his works become acceptable to God; and such are the works of

[1] Wessel applies the same remark to faith: It lives *in* works, but not *by* works. In the smaller treatise de Magnit. Pass. in the Farrago rer. theol. p. 747, he says, "Our good works nourish and strengthen faith, but they do not vivify it; they merely strengthen the bond of life. Only Christ and the Spirit quicken, and only his sacrifice sanctifies us."

which *Paul* declares, that he knows that man is justified without them by faith in Jesus Christ. It is not as if the mere faith of the believer (intrinsically) is so acceptable, that it stands on a level with the rectitude and purity of the angels,[1] but because it has pleased God to give to believers a higher righteousness, rectitude, and purity, than the angels can boast."

With faith *charity* forms an indissoluble whole. It is an essential article in the doctrines of justification, redemption, and sanctification; and to it from every side Wessel always returns. It is the heart of his pious sentiments, the soul of his theology. Here, though by no means repudiating the doctrines of *Paul*, as the foregoing remarks show, he is yet essentially a disciple of *John*. In virtue of the former he points forward to the

[1] We have already observed that Wessel by no means ascribes to faith such an objective worth as that it can be substituted, like something meritorious, for works. To him *faith*, according to the Protestant view, is but the *organ for the reception* of salvation. It may here, however, be likewise observed, that Wessel does not merely recognise the faith that is complete and has reached its full strength, but also that which is incipient, and that which is progressively developing itself in its several stages. In the Farrago, de Magnit. Pass. p. 747, he says: "He who believes in Christ only in so far as to do nothing against him, although his faith be still weak, lives, and were he in this state to be taken out of the world, he would be saved, for we must not understand as mere words of course what the Lord says to John, 'He that is not against us is for us.'" Wessel always puts a high value upon the good will, the sincere desire after living faith and true holiness, and on this subject enumerates principles of a noble and liberal-minded toleration. He expresses himself more fully on the point in the treatise de Provid. Dei. p. 730—733. Here he pronounces the man blessed who has good will. To him the messengers of peace have already proclaimed peace from heaven. He fears not judgment, for a good will finds a pacified judge, and a saviour who pre-exists itself. Not merely does he belong to the people of God, who resigns himself wholly to the Divine call and guidance, but every one too, who does not resist his invitation and guidance. Whoever hears, believes, and desires, would fain be a good soldier, and this is reckoned to him as military service. The Scripture tells us, no doubt, that a man is not crowned except he strive—and of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment. These, however, are rather expressions of strict law. In the Gospel, they give place to the mercy of God, so that all glory belongs solely to him and not to us. Were we to be justified by our merits, the prize would be assigned on the score of justice, and the glory would be ours.

theology of the Reformation; in virtue of the latter he retains a retrospective connection with mysticism, and especially with the great teacher of love, *Thomas à Kempis*.

In illustration of Wessel's *doctrine of charity*, innumerable passages might be adduced; but as it is a theme from which he often digresses into the devotional, we shall briefly comprise what is most essential: Love may be conceived either as original, creative, and divine,[1] or as derivative and human.[2] The former is the parent of faith; the latter is its offspring. Faith is produced by the divine love.[3] To know the love of God as it is in Christ, to trust in it, and resign one's self wholly to it, is called believing. This, however, necessarily includes a reciprocal love[4] and a life thereby evoked of devotedness to God. For this reason, faith is never living, until it passes through love into action, and love in that sense is the central point of the

[1] In the way in which it is customary to demonstrate the existence of God, Wessel brings forward a proof that He must be essentially love. "Nothing is so much the object of desire and love as being. Nothing is so worthy of love as love itself; and nothing ought to be loved so much as God. It necessarily follows that God must be the essential love; for it would be irrational were we obliged to love anything supremely which was not the most deserving of love; and it would be an impossibility, were we bound to love anything, and count it the most lovable, if it were not also the most loving." De Orat. iii. 12, p. 76.

[2] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 78, p. 614.

[3] The preventing and condescending love of God is likewise delineated by Wessel in two *parables*. In the one, de Magnit. Pass. Cap. 71, p. 600—602, he represents men in their estrangement from God as miserable blind beggars, whom the son of an august, righteous, and benignant monarch, himself in all respects equal to his father, receives into his palace, nourishes, heals, and entertains, and from stage to stage, according to the increase of their confidence and love, admits to the participation of higher delights, until he even honours the most advanced with familiar intercourse with himself. In the other, ibid. Cap. 72. p. 602—604, the sinner figures under the image of a peasant's son, endowed indeed with good natural capacities, but poor and rude. A king's daughter, however, looks upon him with affection, without his knowledge, loads him with benefits, and having in course of time trained him to nobler sentiments and manners, appears to his view, and promises him a future and closer connection, as the pledge of which, he in the meanwhile receives a precious ring ornamented with a rich carbuncle (the emblem of love.) Scal. Medit. Exampl. i. p. 359.

[4] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 345.

whole Christian life, being itself begotten by faith, which embraces the divine love, and becoming in its turn the source of all the good that exists in the disposition and is evinced by the actions of man. All true life is in love, and where love is wanting there is death.[1] It is not sufficient, however, merely to love in any way; the value of love is determined by its object. The highest and worthiest object of it is God, to love whom is necessary to every one not self-blinded; for God reveals himself to us as love; and offers to us the nutritive bread of love[3] in Christ, who, in all he said and did, evinced a divine, quickening, and inspiring love. "All life," says Wessel,[4] "is in love, and to such a degree, that he who is destitute of it is no more alive than a block. Not only does love feed upon love, but is begotten, cherished, kindled, and inflamed by it. Love is the food of love. All the works of Christ, all his doctrines, all his sufferings, are but patterns of love, incitements and allurements to it, means of kindling, quickening, inflaming, and feeding it." The love of Christ has achieved the greatest things, and hence it must also produce the most powerful effects. It has displayed the highest devotedness, and consequently must also possess the strongest attractive power.[5] He who is not moved by it, is dead; he who is not sensible to it, is stupid; he who is not warmed by it, is cold.[6] "It is impossible frequently to revolve in the mind what thy Lord, thy God, thy Saviour hath done and suffered from love to thee, and not to love him in return. To the cold heart the contemplation of a lover, and of such a lover as this, is a kindling fire, compelling it to love in return. Whether he please or not, the man who considers and contemplates the love and tender passion of this lover must love him in return."[7] Christ is our friend only when we return his love, for reciprocity is indispensable to friendship. Unreciprocated love has for him who is its object rather something

[1] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 86, p. 634.

[2] De Orat. vii. 9. p. 135. De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 7, p. 672.

[3] "Love is the food of love. If you would be loved by others, love them." De Orat. viii. 10, p. 156.

[4] De Orat. viii. 6, p. 148.

[5] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 68, p. 592.

[6] De Orat. vii. 9, p. 135. and de Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 7, p. 672.

[7] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 1, p. 659.

that is painful.[1] Here, however, a weak, lukewarm, and moderate love is not sufficient, but only that which is entire and ardent, full and decided. In every thing Wessel rejects halves, and requires what is full and entire,[2] and especially in this. In his eyes a lukewarm love is as good as none; it may be called approbation or favour, but love and friendship it is not.[3] Love to God in Christ, to be worthy of its object, must correspond in magnitude and sublimity with the Divine and original love, and this it does only when it produces great things. True love knows no measure. It must do what is great, or it is no love at all.[4] It does not care for common things. It does not fear those who kill the body, nor even Him who can destroy the soul, because it loves Him and only aims at doing his will.[5] This love is likewise wholly exempt from selfishness. Unlike selfish and sensual love, it does not, when its hopes are disappointed, pass into hatred. On the contrary, it remains pure, steadfast, and always on the increase; it has a cleansing efficacy, and delivers the mind from false imaginations and thoughts; it refines and establishes the soul,[6] and qualifies for entering into the kingdom of heaven; nay, is in itself supreme and eternal blessedness.[7] Without love there can be no participation in the kingdom of heaven, for that is the fellowship of loving brethren,[8] founded by him who is the king of love. Much more is the rank which every one holds in this kingdom determined by the measure of his love.[9]

The Divine love in Christ, however, forms but a part of his saving influence. There is, besides, *the whole manifestation of*

[1] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 75, p. 608.

[2] Thus he says de Magnit. Pass. Cap. 84, p. 631: Nesciunt homines, quid sit esse perfectum Christianum. Imperfectus Christianus non adhuc Christianus, quanto nescit.

[3] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 75, p. 609.

[4] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 81, p. 624. Cap. 83. p. 628.

[5] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 81, p. 619.

[6] De Orat. i. 2, p. 6. Scal. Medit. i. 14, p. 213.

[7] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 80, p. 618.

[8] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 78, p. 615.

[9] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 355 and 356, where among other observations it is said: In regno tuo quisque tanto sublimior, quanto amantior, ubi omnes regnicolae meri sunt fratrum propter regem amatores. There are also beautiful things said respecting the nature of Christian love in the work de Magnit. Pass. Cap. 38, p. 534—536.

his life, which is a display of divinity, and of which the vital contemplation is intended to transfuse divinity into ours.[1] In Christ dwelt the fulness of the Divine life, and out of his fulness we all receive, by the loving intuition and active imitation of his pure and exalted pattern, and by the reception of his Spirit into our hearts. Yea, this is the only way to arrive at true wisdom, charity, and blessedness.[2] Our own fleeting life is a poor and worthless thing, barren and unfruitful, and like a vapour that vanishes away, if it do not stand in the middle between two great and noble lives, by which it is magnified and ennobled. The one is the life to come, for which we hope, the other is the life of Christ, our king, priest, and prophet, which has been manifested for our consolation.[3] His life is great and holy in God's sight. It is, however, given to every man, in as far as by contemplation, reverence, and love,[4] he connects himself with it; and in as far as it is given to him, is he truly quickened and blessed.[5] In this way, a reciprocal action of the most beautiful kind is established between the Saviour and the subjects of

[1] Dominus Jesus et imago Dei nobis est, et exemplar nobis ad Deum. Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 367.

[2] . . . ad perfectam sapientiam, gloriam et charitatem nobis nulla vera via est, nisi per sapientiam, gloriam et charitatem, quam Dominus Jesus in carne monstravit. De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 28, p. 704, with which comp. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 331.

[3] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 1, p. 414.

[4] Ibid. p. 415.

[5] The stress which Wessel lays upon the loving contemplation of the life and passion of Jesus, is seen from the fact, that he not merely in his several writings reverts from time to time to the subject, but has composed several treatises which are exclusively occupied with it, and repeat the main theme sometimes in the same words. The Treatise de Causis, mysteriis et effectibus dominicae passionis, and the propositions, De Magnitudine passionis, which have been collected together in the Farrago rerum theolog., accord so fully with the works de Causis incarnationis and de Magnitud. passionis, that it is unnecessary to give particular extracts from them. I confine myself here to a very few. Wessel shews that the word of God in Christ became man, in order once more to inspire man with true and lively confidence. "Who does not know how the child of poverty, when dwelling in the vicinity of a rich and powerful, a benevolent, generous, and compassionate man, draws confidence from the circumstance, that his wretchedness will soon be relieved? Well, we are in this way neighbours to Christ, our Lord. He must love us, and he really does love us, as himself." Wessel then illustrates, in particular, the importance and

his salvation. The latter do not merely receive from him; they also give to him, though, no doubt, they give only that which he himself originally produced. Christ delights in the love which he has kindled; and that which he imparts to men for the nourishment of their souls, he again receives for his own refreshment, from them. In this manner there arises a play of the Divine powers, a circle of giving and taking, of beneficence and gratitude, of love and its return, which goes on through eternity. "Out of this fulness," says Wessel,[1] "all the members, whether in heaven or on earth, receive. He gives and takes, and what he gives, he likewise receives again. Nor in the vineyard of the Lord is this difficult; for on the spiritual domain, a good action is perfected and completed by the reaction which it calls forth (its reflex);[2] so that he who gives in charity, is he also who derives pleasure and delight from giving. First, he sows and plants, and then reaps and gathers the fruit. First, he feeds the flock, and then more than any other feeds upon its milk. In the same way, all streams return to their source, that they may gush from it anew, more copiously than before. Blessed is that circle in the streams of the inner life, whereby the blessings which flowed out by the bounty of God, flow back again to their source by confession, thankfulness, faithful love, and pure righteousness!"

efficacy of the knowledge and habitual contemplation of the *life of Christ*. Being a life so exalted and holy, it is transfused into us in the same measure in which we unite ourselves to Christ by reverence and love. Christ imparts his life to those who believe in him. His name must be exalted above all else in our hearts. This, however, is only done by the most perfect love, which casts all else into the shade. Christ is our *pattern* which has been lifted up from the earth; and whosoever looks to him is also lifted up, and obtains the right direction. The love of Christ is a consuming fire, and cannot co-exist with a heart which is cold and uninflamed. No one comes to Jesus but through Jesus, and according to his rule. The true way, however, is living faith. Elsewhere Wessel also remarks that the life of Christ has a really prefigurative character only in so far as it is *also imitated*. A pattern which is not imitated, is useless, dead, and unfruitful. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 334, Exempl. ii. p. 371. This is another important point of connection between *Wessel* and *Thomas à Kempis*.

[1] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 17, p. 486.

[2] . . . in intelligibili regione rectum actum reflexus integrat et perficit.

This training of man to perfect love, or, in other words, his sanctification, cannot otherwise be accomplished than *by the Holy Ghost.* They who do not *exist* of themselves, are of themselves just as little capable of loving. A holy love takes its rise in their heart only by Divine agency![1] God prevents us when we rebel against him; how much more will he give us his Spirit when we turn to him again![2] Besides, they only are the sons of God who have received the spirit of the Son. By this Spirit they become acceptable to Him, execute his will, and engage in his service. Nor is it they who do so; but rather the Spirit of God that is in them.[3] In this manner, however, man is ever more and more transformed into the image of God, closely united with him, and even made partaker of his nature. To indicate this highest stage of sanctification, Wessel employs the figures of the *mystical theology.*[4] It is true he will not expressly sanction the customary phrases of "self-mortification and self-annihilation;" but he extols, as the pinnacle of a pious life, "a silence and calmness in God's presence, which is but the obverse of profound admiration of his inconceivable majesty."[5] To express the closest vital fellowship with God, he often and fondly employs the image of the bridal state and marriage;[6] And, in fine, designates salvation when complete as a sort of *deification.*[7] By this, of course, he does not mean a pantheistical absorption into the divine substance, but only close mystical union, or what he elsewhere expresses as follows: "The good man will at last attain to a state in which, as the regene-

[1] De Orat. ix. 4, p. 162.

[2] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 341.

[3] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 405, with which compare De Orat. i. 16, p. 28, viii. 12, p. 139, De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 65. p. 588. It may be here observed that Wessel likewise imagines that good and evil angels influence the moral development of man. De Orat. x. 5 and 6, p. 178 and 179.

[4] Sensible of the limits of our knowledge so long as we walk in faith, he likewise recognises a genuine mystical theology. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 33, p. 519.

[5] De Orat. i. 12, p. 22, 23.

[6] Scal. Medit. ii. 22, p. 220. De Magnit. Passion. Cap. 68, p. 592. Cap. 70, p. 599. Cap. 88, p. 638 and 639. Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 394 and 406.

[7] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 405 and 406.

rated and purified image of God, he will enjoy the most blissful union with Him, and in which neither man nor angel is anything, but only the new creature in Christ."[1] To this pitch he rises in the degree in which sin ceases[2] and love increases[3] within him; and when sin is perfectly abolished and love consummated, he passes into the kingdom of heaven—that kingdom "which is free from death, infirmity, bondage, vanity, decay, unfruitfulness, and penury,—the kingdom of life, of strength, of fulness and safety, of redemption and freedom, of truth, purity, and fruitfulness."[4]

In all these points, *Wessel* shows himself to be a disciple of the *mystical school*, which extolled in Christianity the inner life, and love as its centre. In particular, his doctrine of the appropriation and *imitation of the life of Christ*, demonstrates him to be the pupil of *Thomas à Kempis*. But he has outstripped his master, and his progress is chiefly manifest in three points. In the first place, side by side with an inward participation of life, which is the subjective element in the redeeming and atoning work of Christ, Wessel lays greater stress upon the *objective* element. In the second place, for this reason he places that constituent of Christian life in which the original receptive power of the salvation offered in Christ resides, namely, *faith*, more in the foreground, and contemplates it more distinctly, not only as the necessary complement, but likewise as the proper source, of love. In the third place, he forms a nobler, freer, and *more spiritual* conception of the doctrine of the *imitation of Christ* in faith and love; inasmuch as he does not, like Thomas, cleave to the particulars and externals in the life of Jesus, but always takes the whole of it, and the essential spirit emanating from it, into view. These, however, are the very points at which he makes a more complete transition to the *theology of the Reformation*; for the peculiarities of that theology, as compared with mysticism, were, that it did not merely urge the subjective aspect of the doctrine of salvation, but sought to impress

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 16, p. 450.
[2] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 58, p. 573.
[3] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 406.
[4] De Orat. vii. 10, p. 124. With which compare the noble picture of future blessedness in the Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 406.

the mind more deeply with the objective, or, in other words, the absolute and intrinsic worth of what Christ did and suffered,—that in the appropriation of salvation it strenuously placed faith in the centre,—and that, in the imitation of the life of Christ, it led the believer away from all the particularities and externals, as, for instance, poverty, celibacy, and the like, on which the ascetical and monkish middle ages laid so great a stress, and directed his view to the image of Christ as a whole, and its inward spirit.

Hitherto we have been dealing merely with the individual in his connection with the salvation offered in Christ. That salvation, however, is to be strenuously propagated, and for this purpose a society has been formed, by means of which it may be communicated as something always present and always fresh. We speak of the *Church*. And this Church, from the days of Christ and the Apostles, has in its turn instituted particular ordinances, that the salvation may be constantly kept alive. Here, then, a new cycle of doctrines is opened up, and these, as being not less important for the middle ages than for the transition to the Reformation, we shall next consider in detail.

CHAPTER THIRD.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS AND THE MEANS OF SALVATION.

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1. OF THE CHURCH AS THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

In the Reformation, the subjective tendency, hitherto left in the shade, was brought prominently forward, and, conformably to it, the *doctrine of salvation* made the central point of all; and, in the same way, in the mediaeval period, consonantly to the one-sided objective tendency, the *Institute of the Church* may be designated as the axis on which the progress of European society, from the reign of Gregory VII. to the Reformation,

turned. The Church is Christianity in an objective shape; and inasmuch as the Christian spirit, for the maintenance of its existence and purity, requires to form for itself a consistent external power, the Church is an institution necessary at all times. By virtue of this very objective character, however, the Church may also become obstructive and dangerous, when, in place of using the power it has acquired in a right way for the preservation of the Christian spirit, it invades the civil domain, applies itself to external objects, and, as a necessary consequence, looks to nothing but the maintenance of its own objective power, disowns the claims of subjectivity, and obstructs, or violently suppresses the free development of life. Such was the state of things actually introduced, and in increasing degrees, during the middle ages. The vital unity which not merely tolerates, but even requires, a free multiplicity of members, had been converted into a mechanical and rigid uniformity, which the Church, while repudiating the allegation "of thirsting for blood," had yet shed streams of the noblest blood in order to enforce. A reaction on the part of the free Christian spirit could not but ensue. This runs through the whole mediæval period, until, in the Reformation, it becomes a great fact and governing principle.

Both of these things, the mediaeval modification of the Church and the reaction of the Reformers against it, were in the first instance more a matter of life than of doctrine. The Church, and no less the antagonism it encountered, realised themselves in deeds, without waiting till the school should demonstrate their right to do so. In all cases, however, and in this no less than others, theory follows practice, in order to give it a foundation. The main basis of the mediaeval *doctrine* respecting *the Church* was, on the one hand, the identification of its temporal manifestation with its idea, and, on the other, the recognition of the necessity of a separate and dominant priestly class. Both the one and the other had their roots in Christian antiquity, but neither was ever fully elaborated until the mediaeval Romano-Germanic epoch. Then it was, that the visible Catholic Church, with all its firmly adjusted ordinances and rules, was set up as the one out of which there was no salvation. Of this Church the priesthood was accredited as the proper substance and governing spirit; while, as the necessary point of culmination and

union to the priesthood, the Papacy was invested with the plenary and transcendental power of a Divine vicegerency,[1] and armed with two swords, the spiritual and temporal, the one to be used directly *within* the Church, the other indirectly and by the civil magistrate, but always *in the* Church's *cause*. Against this doctrine, which was rather asserted than demonstrated, the Reformatory spirit took the field, with the design of reviving men's consciousness of the difference between the idea and the reality—of bringing back the Church to her primitive spirit—of purifying the true idea of the priesthood from false accretions, and of demonstrating the foundations of the Papacy to be indefensible. All this we find attempted in various ways by the Waldenses, by Wickliffe, Huss, Savonarola, and Laurentius Valla. Nor on such a field could *Wessel* remain in the rear.

During the whole course of his eventful life, he had laboured for the improvement of ecclesiastical affairs. His principal treatises relate to the institutions and necessities of the Church, especially to its government. We have here, therefore, a rich fund to expect. Our attention is especially called to the treatises collected in the Farrago Rerum Theologicarum : de Dignitate et Potestate Ecclesiastica, de Sacramento Poenitentiae, de Communione Sanctorum et Thesauro Ecclesiae, de Purgatorio, and to one de Sacramento Eucharistiae, which is not in the Farrago. From these sources we select the following as the leading thoughts of Wessel respecting the nature of the Church.

It is true that he nowhere lays down a precisely defined *notion of the Church*. If, however, we collect his scattered statements, it appears that, in his view the Church is the *communion of saints* (*i.e.* of persons still undergoing the process of sanctification and of persons already perfected), subject to Jesus Christ, as their one true head, which has been instituted by God, receives laws from Him alone, and is founded upon mutual love and living faith in the Gospel. The several component parts of this notion may be distinctly indicated in his works. That he conceives the Church as something essentially *internal*, as a fellowship of holy persons,

[1] On the origin of the figure of *the two swords*, see *Grimm* Vridankes Bescheidenheit, Göttingen 1834. Einl. s. 57, and summarily *Hagenbach's* Dogmengeschichte ii. 1 s. 192.

whose unity rests on spiritual grounds, and not upon connection with one visible and supreme head, is evident from the following passage:[1] "All saints are bound together by a true and essential unity, inasmuch as they are connected with Christ by one faith, one hope, and one love; however great the local distances and intervals of time by which they may be separated, under whatever Prelates they may live, and however ambitiously these may contend with and contradict each other, or however much they may be even involved in heretical error. And this is that Society of which it is said in the creed, 'I believe in the *communion of saints*.' Hence all our forefathers who were baptised with the same baptism, fed with the same spiritual food, and strengthened by the same spiritual rock as ourselves, are still in connection with us. This unity and fellowship of saints is by no means broken by the difference of their governors, because the impiety and even heresy of those who rule them do not injure good men. It is notorious that a Greek Christian, imbued with true piety, may possibly at Constantinople, and under his schismatical patriarch, believe all the things which the Western Christian believes at Rome. How then can he be injured by the heretical depravity of his party? *The unity of the Church under one Pope is therefore only accidental* and not *necessary*, although it may contribute much to the communion of the saints. It obtains under the same supreme head even among subjects who have no fellowship with their head. For every one is in fellowship with those who resemble himself, the man of piety with the pious, the man of faith with believers, and vice versa." The inward nature of the Church,[2] Wessel also illustrates, by shewing that the living

[1] Quae sit vera communio sanctorum? Opp. p. 809 and 810.

[2] The false secularisation of the Church during the middle age was mainly occasioned by the immense wealth and *property which it possessed*. Antagonistically to this, *Wessel* recognises the spirituality of the Church, in the fact that he considers its property as something in and of itself indifferent, and which may be either beneficial or injurious, according to the Church's spirit at the time. He says, de Potest. eccles. p. 751: "It is well that the Church possesses riches and temporal power, and it were better that she possessed more of them; for it is desirable to possess the means of doing good, and the more of them the better. It is also, however, bad that the Church possesses great riches and temporal power, not merely because she thereby

bond between its members is not an outward *authority over their faith*, but mutual *love*. Christians are not bound to believe, but they are bound to love, one another. "It is not by the bond of faith[1] that God has knit together the society of men, so that one man must necessarily believe that which another avers as true; But he has knit them together by love, so that of necessity the one is bound to love the other, even though he sin, although he is not compelled to believe him, even when he speaks the truth. Because there may be a well-founded suspicion to prevent me from believing the friend I love, and by whom I am loved, even when he is speaking the truth; for no one knows what is in a man. . . . . As, therefore, we are not obliged to believe any man at all, so neither are we under any such obligation with reference to the *Pope*; for our faith would be very fluctuating, were we bound to believe one who himself often errs, as it may be shown from the decretals the Pope does. . . . . Even as regards the Pope we are bound to love, reverence, and obey him, only when he properly administers his office."

Wessel holds firmly the *unity of the Church*, but he no less regards this unity as of an internal kind, based upon true fellowship of spirit, emanating from a connection with Christ, the invisible head, and not attached to the identity of a visible one. "We must acknowledge," he says,[2] "a *Catholic Church*, but we must place its unity in the unity of the faith and of the (celestial) head, in the unity of the corner-stone (Christ), not in the unity of Peter or his successor, as the Church's governor *(directoris)*. For what could Peter, when in Italy, do more for those among the Indians who were in danger from temptation and persecution than pray for them, although he could certainly do somewhat more than his successors? or what, during the severe persecutions, against the false teachers in the various quarters of the world? What decrees or general councils could keep the Church

obtains the power of doing evil, but because by their means she actually does it."

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 780. By *faith* in this place Wessel does not understand moral confidence, which he unquestionably looks upon as the basis of all human society; but he means taking for granted doctrinal assertions which another may propound.

[2] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 779 and 780.

together in this derivative unity?[1] It is, therefore, only the original unity[2] under the one true head which is spoken of in the Apostles' Creed. In these days of ours, the Gospel has been spread to the ends of the earth, and Christians are to be found on the other side of the Hyperboreans, Indians, and Scythians, to whom no decrees of the Pope, or of the General Councils at Constance and Basle, can by any human means be intimated; and yet, nevertheless, by the unity of faith, piety, and true love, the Christians constitute with us one Catholic and Apostolic Church, even though they should never have heard, that there exists such a city as Rome, or such a person as the Roman Bishop."

The *Church*, whose supreme head is Christ, can *be founded only upon the Gospel.* The Gospel, however, is a doctrine of God, and consequently the true Church acknowledges none but God as her lawgiver, and no human legislation in matters of faith. The Gospel constitutes the foundation of all authority in the Church, and only in as far as its rulers stand upon this foundation, are the subjects under any obligation to obey them. The path which Wessel prescribes to the Christian does not, like that of *Augustine's*, lead through the Church to the Gospel, but, like the *Reformers'*, through the Gospel to the Church. "It is," he says,[3] "for God's sake that we believe the Gospel, and for the Gospel's sake that we believe the Church and the Pope; "we do not believe the Gospel for the Church's sake." This is another main point, where Catholicism and Protestantism separate, and *Wessel* appears a thorough *Protestant.* The essentially Catholic stand-point is expressed in the well-known words of *Augustine:* I would not believe in the Gospel unless the authority of the Catholic Church induced me to do so.[4] This

[1] . . . . . in unitate hac secunda, in this subordinate or secondary union, that is, according to the connection, external union.

[2] . . . . prima unitas, *i.e.* internal or spiritual unity.

[3] De Potest. Eccl. Opp. p. 759.

[4] The passage of *Augustine* is to be found in his work, Contra Epistolam Manichaei, quam vocant Fundamenti. Cap. 6. Opp. tom viii., p. 111, ed. Bened. The author is combating the apostolical dignity and mission of Manes, and says: "I ask who then is Manichaeus (Manes)? You will answer me: an apostle of Christ. But I do not believe it. After that you will not know what either to say or do. Perhaps you will read to me the Gospel, and draw from it some proof for the person of Manes. Were you, however, to find a person who does not as yet be-

principle, in as far as it makes the authority of Scripture dependent upon that of the Church, Wessel directly combats, sets up the opposite (or Protestant) principle, that the Church derives its authority only from the Gospel. He combats it also, however, indirectly by giving it, as Martin Bucer and other evangelical theologians afterwards did, an interpretation which diverges from the common one, to the effect, that Augustine's words refers only to the commencement of faith, and not to the permanent connection between Church and Gospel. It was the commencement of his faith in Scripture which the great father derived from the Catholic Church; he does not mean generally to give the Church any preference over the Gospel.[1] This interpretation is not altogether

lieve the Gospel, what would you do were he to say to you: I do not believe. In fact, I would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church induced me to do so: (ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae Ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas.) If then I have followed those who said to me, Believe the Gospel! why should I not believe them when they say to me, Do not believe the Manichaeans!" In estimating correctly the meaning of this passage, we must not, it is true, overlook the fact, that its express object is by no means to declare the conviction of Augustine respecting the relation between Church and Gospel, and that it only occurs casually in the course of a logical argument; and that besides, it relates *proximately* to the commencement and first establishment of faith in the heart. If, however, we take into view Augustine's whole theological and ecclesiastical principles, especially with reference to the Manichaeans and heretics in general, there is scarcely room to doubt that he conceded to the Church, as essentially one and Catholic, even a general superiority over Scripture. With other of the earlier Fathers he had discovered, that solely on the ground of Scripture, the heretics who likewise appealed to it, could not be successfully combated, and he therefore laid hold of another, and, as it appeared to him, a higher and weightier authority. At the same time, it is scarcely necessary to say, that the proposition, though enunciated by a great father of the Church, does not thereby necessarily become truth. Compare the treatise of *Lücke* on the words of Augustine, in the Zeitschrift für evangelische Christen. Heft 1, s. 52, edited by him and Gieseler. Besides, Augustine did not consistently hold his own principle; for while, in opposition to the Manichaeans, he insisted upon the Catholic Church, in opposition to the Donatists, he insists upon Scripture, as the supreme decisive authority. See *Neander's* Kirchengesch. B. ii. Abtheil. 1, s. 437 and 438.

[1] This explanation occurs in several passages, *e.g.*, de Indulgent. Cap. 9, p. 893, and de Potest. eccles. p. 759. In the first of these, Wessel says: "For the rest, that saying of Augustine about the Gospel and

correct or exhaustive, but at least it shews what Wessel himself considered to be the truth upon the subject, and what he therefore presumed was Augustine's sentiment. He did not, it is true, absolutely reject the authority and traditions of the Church, the dictates of her teachers and councils, but he insisted that both should always, be referred to Scripture, and only when in accordance with it, recognised as valid. Of *tradition* he says,[1] "I well know that Scripture alone is not a wholly adequate rule of faith; I know that some things were delivered by the apostles which have not been recorded, and that all such traditions, as well as the canonical Scriptures, are to be adopted into the rule of faith. These two, and whatever can by necessary consequence be clearly inferred from them, constitute the sole rule of faith; and this sole rule of faith, from which none can deflect without the loss of salvation, I strictly recognise." Proceeding, however, to give his meaning with greater precision, he adds the important words.[2] "I believe *with* the holy Church. I do not believe in it; but I believe in the Holy Ghost, who determines the rule of faith, and has spoken by the apostles and prophets. *With* the Holy Church I believe, and *according to* the Holy Church I believe, but not *in* the

the Church, proves no more than it contains. It serves to designate an origin, not to make a comparison. (It relates to the commencement of faith, not to that which determinates it as an authority, originis, non comparationis verbum est.) I would not believe in the Gospel if I had not believed in the Church. Just as of the multitude of believers in early times every one might have said with truth: I would not believe the Gospel if I had not believed Peter: Even so do I now say, had I not as a boy believed my parents and then my teachers and at last the clergy, I would not now believe the Gospel: But, for all that, I believe the Gospel more than any conclave of mortals whatsoever, and must believe it more, and were I to find that the whole human race did not believe, I should nevertheless feel myself obliged to adhere to the Gospel more than to them. Augustine has therefore indicated in his saying, the commencement of his yet tender and incipient faith, and has not drawn a comparison between the authority of the Church and the dignity of the Gospel." That Wessel set the authority of the Scriptures not only far above that of all heathen authors, as might be inferred of itself respecting him, but even above that of all ecclesiastical teachers, popes, &c., he expressly affirms in the Seal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 328.

[1] De Indulgent. Cap. 6, p. 887 and 888.

[2] De Indulgent. Cap. 6, p. 888.

Church, because faith is an act of worship, a sacrifice of theological virtue, which must be offered to God alone."

As regards the *declarations of the fathers* and the *supreme head of the Church*, Wessel concedes, that it is much more likely that a single individual is in error, than a whole society of learned men, and therefore that every one ought to be cautious with his peculiar opinions. On the other hand, however, he does not shut his eyes to the possibility of a multitude of teachers missing the mark, and for this reason advises all to search the Gospel with the utmost care, and firmly hold the truth that shines out of it.[1] In this sense he says,[2] "It appears to me in fact that theirs are no slender reasons who, in consequence of the undoubted authority of Scripture, which must necessarily be acknowledged, deflect from the merely probable opinion of the Popes. To speak more plainly: So long as it appears to me that the Pope, or the school, or any other society, maintains any opinion contrary to the truth of Scripture, my first duty is to adhere with the utmost care to the Scripture; but then, as it is not probable that men of such eminence will fall into error, it behoves me diligently to investigate the truth on both sides, though always with greater reverence for the Holy Scriptures than for any human averment from whomsoever it may come." In another passage he also remarks:[3] "We ought to observe and obey the doctrines laid down by prelates and doctors, in the way recommended by Paul, *i.e.*, so long as their authors sit in the seat of Moses, and teach consonantly to him. When, however, they propound what is either foreign or contrary to his doctrine, it is not obligatory upon believers to receive it or anything at variance with the law of perfect freedom. For we are the servants of God, not of the Pope; whose servants, however, we should be, were we bound by all his dictates whatsoever; but it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. . . . . It is only when the clergy and doctors agree with the true and sole Teacher, and lead us to him, that we ought to listen to them; for he must be blind and foolish who follows a blind and foolish guide."[4]

[1] De Potest. Eccl. Opp. p. 758 and 759.
[2] De Indulgent. Cap. 1. p. 878 and 879.
[3] De Potest. Eccles. Opp. p. 760.
[4] Ibid. p. 761.

Wessel very frequently recurs to the *relation betwixt the authority of Scripture and that of Ecclesiastical superiors*, in order to determine the limits within which a Christian is bound to obey the Pope and the Prelates; and as this was at the time one of the questions which penetrated most deeply into the process of the Church's formation, it will be proper to develop his fundamental views somewhat more fully. He sets out always with the proposition, that faith, as the highest faculty of man, as a theological virtue, nay, as an act of Divine worship, can be offered only to God, never to any human being; and that, when it relates to anything apart from God, this is done merely for God's sake, and only in so far as prescribed by a demonstrable Divine authority. "To believe in God, who is our Lord and Father, is Divine worship.[1] Hence what the Church believes, she does not believe for the sake of any member of the Church. The object of her belief, God, and believing in God, she believes in Jesus Christ, who is God, and also believes in the Holy Ghost, speaking through the Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets. Paul, therefore, justly exhorts his converts to believe nothing at the hand of any teacher who might appear among them, except what they had received from the Apostle by whom they were taught, even though an angel were to come from heaven, or that Apostle himself to return and teach them differently from what the Holy Ghost had previously taught them through him. For the Church does not believe in Paul or Peter, nor in angels from heaven, nor in any of its own members, nor even in the whole Church itself, but in God alone, in whom it also hopes, and whom, by faith and hope, it adores." Accordingly we are to believe what this or that person says, not because he says it, but because he is one who speaks by the Spirit of God. This may, no doubt, be also the case with a teacher of the Church, a pope, and general council, and it is to be presumed, that the Western believers will not be forsaken of God. But we have no criterion for the truth of their statements, except in comparing them with what has certainly emanated from the Spirit of God, viz., the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures.[2] With great ingenuity, Wessel directs

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 778.
[2] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 779.

attention to the fact, that in exhorting believers to submit themselves to every ordinance of man, Peter significantly adds, for the Lord's sake;[1] "For believers among the people ought to shew submission to their ecclesiastical superiors, by faith when they teach, and by obedience when they command, always, however, recollecting, that they are bound to do so for God's sake, which means that they ought to point their readiness to believe first to God and the Gospel, and first offer to Him their obedience. What the people believe at the mouth of their minister, when their belief is sound, they believe, because it is consonant to the Gospel, and were they persuaded that he taught them contrary to this, they would neither believe nor obey him.[2] Wessel then proceeds to lay down the proper position of an ordinary Christian towards his instructor and ecclesiastical governor. The teacher, if he really fulfil his vocation, must be soundly instructed, and, by a well-exercised mind, be better acquainted with the Holy Scriptures than he who is not a teacher. Whoever possesses a juster notion of theological truth, cannot be subjected in faith to him who makes assertions but has less insight. Rather must the reverse be the case. For the most part, teachers, and especially an assembly of teachers, will hit the truth,[3] but inasmuch as even they may possibly err, inasmuch as this may happen even to a Council and a Pope, the Gospel alone must be the ultimate and supreme rule.[4] He then applies the same prin-

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 13.

[2] De Potest. eccles. Opp. p. 758.

[3] On this point Wessel lays down the following principles, de Sacram. Poenit. p. 781: Every individual must, in the first instance, presuppose, not merely of a distinguished assembly, but likewise of a celebrated man, that they will not err in their deliverances. In spite, however, of this respectful presumption, he ought not precipitately to consider all as truth which such an assembly or such a man avers. He must exercise his own judgment. He is under obligation to believe only in God and in his word, in the latter of which he must search. Never ought he to follow the decision even of a numerous crowd, contrary to his conviction, and so long as it appears to him to contradict Scripture. But while pursuing this course, he ought to be always ready to believe, when convinced of an opinion sounder than his own. On this account, it is not without cause established as a rule in councils, that even a single dissentient ought to be heard.

[4] Wessel does not scruple, on any contest arising between Scripture and the Church, to give the preference to the former. He says in a

ciple to the enactments of ecclesiastical superiors. They are obligatory in so far as they are wise, and that means, in so far as they are consonant to Christ; otherwise they are not. "The laws and statutes of prelates are binding in proportion to the wisdom they contain. Hence they cannot dictate to us under the pain of mortal sin, except where the act of the transgressor includes intrinsically such a character. It is on this account also, that in indifferent matters (*in rebus neutris*), such as was the decree of Pope Pius on the subject of alum,[1] believers cannot possibly sin mortally, by reason merely of the Papal mandate.[2]

letter to Engelbert of Leyden, Opp. p. 869: "You observe that the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit. This is certainly true, but only in so far as the Church is holy, and exercises its saving power; not, however, in so far as it is ignorant and in error. For, alas, we have cause to complain that in many things, it (the visible Church) does err." From the difference of opinions within the Church, and the contradiction of teachers, Wessel deduces the right and liberty of believers to prove opinions and pronounce sentence upon them; in doing which, however, he establishes as a rule that the party who leads the proof shall, as reason requires, sail to the coast of the sacred canon, *i.e.*, the canon of sacred Scripture. De Sacram. Poenit. p. 805. Thes. 23.

[1] This passage, which was formerly obscure, has now been completely cleared up to me by an interesting essay of Professor Kist, contained in the work edited by him and Royaard, Kirchenhist. Archiv, Th. 6, s. 171: Sluikhandel eene Doodzonde, ter Verklaring der: Alumina Tulfae etc. The facts are briefly as follows. At the middle of the 15th century, certain rich alum mines were discovered by John de Castro, at Tolfa, in the States of the Church, and not far from Civita Vecchia, and were worked with such vigour by Pius II. as to produce yearly 5000 tons of alum, and a yearly rent of 50,000 dollars. Until that time the alum used in Italy had been obtained from the East, but thenceforward, to encourage the native alum works, and deprive infidels of an advantage, not only was the importation of Oriental alum strictly forbidden, but Pius II., using his station as supreme head of the Church to promote his interests as Regent of the Ecclesiastical States, placed *alum-smuggling* in the list of *mortal sins*, which could not be pardoned on any terms. It thus happened that while the greatest criminals had the power of purchasing indulgence for a trifling sum, a smuggler of alum was shut out from all the consolations of the Church; and it was natural that this enormous disproportion should draw from such a person as Wessel a condemnatory allusion.

[2] De Potest. eccles. Opp. p. 755 and 756. And further on, p. 756, "The apostle instructs us to prove all things, but to hold fast that which is good. All, therefore, which they say, we are enjoined to practise and to hold, not according to their corrupt meaning, but according

It appears even from these intimations what was, in part at least, Wessel's conviction respecting the *legislative* and *judicial authority of the Clergy* in the Church. At the same time, in his work on Church government,[1] he expresses himself on several special aspects of the subject. Here we have particularly to attend to what he says on the original vocation of clergymen, on the priesthood, on the judicial office of the clergy, and on the Pope's station in the Church.

It is well known, that one of the most beautiful and profound ideas of apostolical Christianity and the primitive Church was that of the *universal priesthood* of all Christians. From the third century, however, this idea gradually receded into the back ground, and at the consummation of the hierarchy in the middle age, wholly vanished. The Reformers, and especially Luther, revived it afresh, and grounded upon it the position occupied by the clergy in the evangelical Church. Even prior to Luther, however, we find it hinted at by Wessel. His language is: "There is a double priesthood. The one is a matter of rank, and sacramentally communicated; the other is a matter of the rational nature, and common to all. Without the first the second is sufficient. The first, when the second is wanting, involves even guilt; the second of itself brings grace. By it St Anthony excelled many bishops, but a tanner excelled St Anthony. The Apostles were consecrated and anointed with the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is the unction which Jesus has procured for us by his death. Hence we are all baptised and anointed by the death of Christ and the Holy Spirit." If, originally, all Christians are priests, the clergy do not constitute a special rank as mediators between God and man, to whom a higher dignity and holiness intrinsically pertain. They are appointed for the sake of government, and in consequence of their peculiar religious and scientific education, to execute certain purposes of the Church; and only so far as these purposes reach

to the truth, and as far as the matter agrees with the chair of Moses. In other matters we are not enjoined to observe or to do what they say."

[1] De *Dignitate et Potestate Ecclesiastica*, de vera et recta obedientia, et quantum obligent subditos mandata et statuta Praelatorum. *Wess.* Opp. p. 748—771.

[2] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 775.

and are accomplished by them, do their power and authority extend. The Church does not exist for the sake of the clergy, but the clergy for the sake of the Church; and that principle must determine their whole position. "The pastor is appointed," says Wessel,[1] "to feed the flock of God; but inasmuch as the flock to be fed are possessed of reason and free-will, they are not committed wholly to the power of the pastor, as if nothing were required of them but obedience to him. The sheep ought itself to know both with what it is nourished and with what it is infected, and how it can avoid the pernicious infection even when offered to it by the pastor; and if, in such a case, it follows the pastor, it is without excuse. The duty of the people, accordingly, is to follow their pastor to the pasture. If, however, he does not feed them, he is no pastor, and in that case, as he acts contrary to his duty, the flock are not under obligation to obey him." From another point of view he speaks in the following passage:[2]—"The ecclesiastical magistracy (*Praelatio*) can impart no higher blessing than that on whose account it is instituted. It has been instituted, however, for the purpose of a peaceable and inoffensive association of the sons of God with each other, as far as that can be effected by the prudence and care of frail man when assisted by God. But to make a man more and more acceptable to God, is a matter beyond the power, and to which the authority of the ecclesiastical magistracy does not reach." On this principle, Wessel also denies that the priest is the author of salvation, or judge of the members of the Christian Church. He performs, no doubt, the visible service in the sacraments, but the salvation of which these are the channels comes solely from Christ. "In the sacrament[3] of confession, the priest is no more a judge or absolver than he is a purifier in baptism; for no doubt although he outwardly sprinkles with water, still Christ alone baptiseth with the Holy Ghost, and the same is the case in the other sacraments. The priest, performs the visible service, but exercises no right of power; for the spiritual life, produced by the grace of the Holy Spirit, is imparted by none but Christ himself. The blessing of sacramental absolution in confession

[1] De Potest. eccles. Opp. p. 753.
[2] De Communione Sanctor. Opp. p. 815.
[3] De Sacramento Poenit. p. 794.

does not depend upon the judicial power of the confessor, so that there could be no absolution by the agency of any other than a priest, as, for instance, were one layman in simplicity and sincere piety, and without contempt of ecclesiastical authority, to make a special confession to another.[1] For it is not the priest but Christ who looses the bonds of sin, just as it is not the priest but Christ who baptises with the Holy Spirit; for baptism is Christ's and not John's, or Peter's, or Paul's." The priests, therefore, so far from being the proper authors of salvation, may possibly be even destroyers and antichrists, when they mistake and abuse their position. "Every one,[2] however high the dignity he occupies, in as far as he gives offence to little ones, and, contrary to the will of Christ, misleads them from the pure way of truth and life, is an antichrist, because he resists Christ by destroying those for whom he shed his blood. . . . Christ's desire is to save us by obedience. Many prelates are not ashamed, by disobedience to the commandments and a bad example, give offence in all the things mentioned by Jesus, Matt. xxiii., in his discourse to the people. If this be true, . . . the little ones ought to be advised and admonished by every good man, in order that they may not be offended; for if they are not specially instructed respecting the several villanies and infectious bad example of the prelates, they will be less able to avoid them. No doubt, if we mention such a thing, we shall at once stir up against us, not only the hypocrites and boasters, the ambitious, vain, deceitful, and avaricious among the prelates themselves, but likewise the people committed to their care. . . . Christ, however, did not merely expose the shameful deeds of the scandalous, but even announced an eternal woe against them; and whoever intends to follow his example must know that the Lord was even then ready to take up the cross. Whoever will

[1] The passage is so obscure that doubts may be entertained of its meaning. I shall, therefore, cite the original and difficult Latin words: Sacramentalis ergo absolutionis beneficium in confessione non ex judiciaria potestate confessoris pendet, ut nulla sit absolutio, tanquam a non suo judice, quam ab alio sacerdote, quando pia simplicitate, sincera pietate quis alteri absque contemtu ecclesiasticae auctoritatis extra confiteretur. Perhaps there is a corruption.

[2] De Potest. eccles. p. 763 and 764.

not follow his example may allow offences quietly to grow rank on every side."

At the same time, Wessel is far from ascribing the bad state of an ecclesiastical community solely to the depravity of the prelates. He finds the cause of it no less in the *people*. The two always act and react upon each other. A worthless clergy, no doubt, corrupts the people, but the depravity and tyranny of the prelates, like that of princes and kings, have also their foundation in the people's prevailing wickedness and folly. The spirit of every society, great or small, be it a state, a church, or a convent, communicates itself to the governor. The ordinary character of princes takes its rise from the sins of the subjects. Among a sound, virtuous, and wise people, a bad prince would not be able to keep his place, any more than a dissipated abbot in a well-governed monastery.[1] From this reciprocal connection between the clergy and people, Wessel infers the right, and even the duty, of the latter to resist the former, when corrupt and corrupters of others. "All Christians, from the highest to the humblest, even the peasantry, are bound to resist those who destroy the Church, according to the apothegm,[2] How much soever holy rustics (*sancta rusticitas*) may edify the Church by a meritorious life, as much do they injure it when they do not resist those by whom it is destroyed.[3] The *right* of resistance or of *protestation* by the Christian people against a wicked clergy, and even a wicked pope, is further founded by Wessel upon two main grounds, viz., the original vocation of the clergy to edify the Church, and the original connection between the clergy and the people, which he conceives as a free compact. The words of the Apostle, that there is no power but of God, he explains as follows: There is no authority save for *edification*. In as far as an authority edifies, it is of God, and in as far as it does not edify, he who edifies by resisting it has the power of resistance from God. It is the power of edifying, therefore, which is from God; and he who edifies more, has also a higher power. Accordingly Paul has more true power than Peter, Bernard than Innocent or Eugene, St Francis than

[1] All this is further explained in de Potest. eccles. p. 769 and 770.
[2] Of Jerome.
[3] De Potest. eccles. p. 769.

Honorius."[1] This principle might be looked upon as doubtful, nay, even as dangerous and revolutionary; but we must consider, that he intended to apply it directly only to matters of faith and conscience and upon the domain of moral and religious life, and even here, only in cases of decided and indubitable necessity. In this sense, he not only defends the resistance of the primitive Christians, especially the martyrs, and in particular [redacted]St Vincent and St Laurence, to the mandates of the heathen emperors, but founding upon expressions of Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory, he teaches that he who does not openly resist wicked rulers in the Church, implicates himself in guilt.[2] He appeals to the conflicts of Christ with the Scribes and Pharisees, and says,[3] "The Lord teaches us by his example how believers who witness a scandalous delinquency in their superiors ought to combat and censure it, secretly if it be secret, but openly if it be open; for the Lord cast into the faces of those men what was perverse in their proceedings; and the benefit of doing so, is that arrogance, which obsequiousness leaves to its own arbitrary will, dares not presume as if it could not be punished, or held in check, or destroyed. As often then as they impudently sin, and insolently persist in adding shamelessness to their fault, they must, according to the example of the Lord, be repelled, care being taken not to violate His word by disregarding their salutary admonition. For so long as they sit in Moses's seat, we must do what they say, and in that seat we are to consider them sitting, as long as their acts do not openly contradict their words. But if their life become so scandalous, that they rather destroy by their example than edify by their words, they are no longer to be tolerated, because then they are not sitting in the seat of Moses, but in the seat of the destroyer." Wessel finds a further basis for the right of the Christian people to protest against a corrupt clergy in the circumstance, that the relation betwixt the two proceeds from a free agreement. "All ecclesiastical power rests upon a mutual compact betwixt two, and these are the physician and the patient. The shepherd cannot feed except in so

[1] De Potest. eccles. p. 769.
[2] De Potest. eccles. p. 768—770.
[3] De Potest. eccles. p. 750.

far as the flock are really fed, nor save the sheep except in so far as the sheep are healed. He cannot bind them except in so far as they are bound by the cords of love, nor loose them, except in so far as they are really delivered from the bonds of Satan."[1] Accordingly, all depends upon whether the end for the sake of which the connection was formed is fulfilled. If it be not fulfilled, it, so to speak, abolishes itself. "Every subjection ought to be voluntary and spontaneous, and therefore must not be undertaken without deliberation. Deliberation, however, will look both to the cause and to the fruit. And if these are of such a sort as to determine the party who deliberates beforehand, to enter into the compact, they equally exonerate him who after having entered into it, finds that the other contracting party has not kept his promise."[2] In this respect Wessel commends the custom of the mendicant monks to elect their governors annually. He claims for the Christian people the right *to choose their rulers*, but likewise the right to break the connection when the rulers prove unworthy and inefficient.

The position which Wessel assigns, and must assign, to the *Pope*, results from what we have already said. But the point is one which we must handle more particularly, taking into consideration his various statements upon it. First of all, it is clear that while reverencing in Christ the only true head of the Church, Wessel assigns to the Pope, as its visible head, what is no doubt a high, but at the same time, not more than a *human* dignity, though he by no means considers either his holiness or wisdom immaculate and transcendent. That the Popes were no models of Christian perfection did not require demonstration, and least of all in that age; at the same time Wessel expressly observes, and founds upon the observation a denial of the Pope's competency to impart perfect forgiveness of sin, that such forgiveness can only proceed from one who is himself perfect.[3] If, however, the Pope be not morally perfect,

[1] De Potest. eccles. p. 751 and 752.

[2] De Potest. eccles. p. 765.

[3] Wessel, de Orat. ii. 2, p. 45, develops his thoughts as follows: A full pardon is a perfect pardon: but this can only be vouchsafed by one who is himself perfect, and only to such as are also perfect (that is, to persons really improved and sanctified). There is no prelate,

neither can he be *infallible*, and is all the less entitled to claim this distinction, that it is one which did not belong even to *Peter*, who yet in the eyes of Rome is the greatest of all the Popes. "Even Peter, the first and holiest Pope, grievously erred, that so the Church of after times might know, that she is not bound by the decrees of her sovereign Pontiffs, but that, in the case of any emergent variance, a believer is entitled, by the example of St Peter, and in defence of the rule of faith, to withstand the Pope to his face, and to do this, if there be no alternative, even in the presence of all."[1] And in another passage,[2] "No Pope was ever wiser than Peter, none invested with higher authority, none his superior in sanctity; so that if we ought not to say to any Pope, Wherefore dost thou so? or reprove and censure his acts least of all ought this to have been done to him. But I ask, if the Pope be really worthy of blame *(reprehensibilis)*, and have not walked uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, as all to whom the spirit of Divine wisdom is vouchsafed may easily see to be the fact, what cause is there why he should not be reproved, seeing that even the wisest and holiest among them was publicly censured before all by one who was wiser and holier?" In general, Wessel looks upon the Pope as *a man*, who, although pious and intelligent, is yet subjected to the same intellectual infirmities as the rest of the race. He is not better acquainted with his own heart than other men,[3] and therefore knows as little of his own salvation. If, however, he do not perfectly know himself, far less can he perfectly see through another. For this reason Papal canonization can never rest on any but fluctuating grounds.[4] In like manner the Pope's excommunication, his in-

however, in a state of perfection, not even the Pope, and consequently he can bestow no perfect forgiveness of sin.

[1] De Indulgent. Cap. viii. p. 891. Ibid. p. 892, allusion is also made to the fact that the faculty of Paris had rejected the authority of Pope Clement.

[2] De Potest. eccles. p. 749.

[3] *Wess.* Epist. de Purgat. in Opp. p. 870.

[4] Wessel no doubt admits that a Papal canonization founded on an antecedent inquiry in form, of which he had himself seen an instance at Venice, is more to be relied on than one resting on the changeable opinion of the people. At the same time he is persuaded that, even when it is the work of the Pope, it has no firm foundation, as it is a matter in which all depends upon the inmost disposition, and especially

dulgences and pardon of sin, can never relate to a man's connection with God, but merely to his position in the Church. They are in no case a Divine decision, but a mere human sentence, which may possibly be false, if the Pope is carnal and worldly-minded. If the Pope ought really to exercise a spiritual dominion and jurisdiction over all, he would require to be able to know and to judge of all; but he knows neither the boundaries of the earth, nor the languages of all the nations, and consequently cannot be their judge. Rather has the Holy Spirit reserved to himself the care of the Church's unity, and by no means committed it to the Bishop of Rome, who often heeds very little about the matter.[1]

The foregoing observations likewise furnish an answer to the question, *In how far are the laws and statutes of the Popes obligatory* upon Christendom? The simple answer is, In as far as they really edify the Church, and are wise, and involve true faith, in short, in as far as they are consonant to the Gospel, but no farther. The Pope, equally with the Church, is subject to the Gospel. "The will of the Pope and the authority of Scripture by no means stand upon the same level; but the will of the Pope must be regulated by the truth of the Scripture, and not the truth of the Scripture by the will of the Pope."[2] It is essentially the vocation of the clergy, and of the Pope as one of them, and the head of them all, to edify the Church. If he does this, the members must hear his voice; if he acts otherwise, his action is injurious, and must be resisted. "The Pope," says Wessel,[3] "ought

upon the circumstance, whether the actions of the party have or have not proceeded from the divine spirit of love—a circumstance which no man can possibly ascertain. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 63, p. 583.

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. Opp. p. 779. Compare p. 771. In the last passage, the author says, The extent of the Church, the multitude of believers, and the diversity of their aims and inclinations are so great, that the solicitude of a single man, were he ever so zealous, is insufficient for the exercise of superintendence over them in the things which relate to God. In fact, this is a function which it is impossible to exercise even towards a single individual. For not only do men daily and hourly, but every moment, comport themselves in different ways towards God, and lapse from the divine life, or return to it again. This ever-heaving ocean of spiritual life only God can comprehend, and only the Divine Spirit pierce into its depths.

[2] Epist. de Indulgent. Cap. 8, p. 892.

[3] De Potest. eccles. Opp. p. 767.

to be a prudent and faithful servant, as the experienced and attentive physician is to one who is sick. Hence as a physician when inexperienced and negligent is only dangerous to his patient, the same is the case with the supreme Pontiff. What he does not do with fidelity, prudence, and uprightness, or does in a contrary way, is null.[1] He who is appointed to edify, but does not edify, does nothing. He who is appointed steward, if he do not faithfully manage, squanders the goods." The Pope is not the lord of the Church,[2] but, in common with all believers, is under obligation to God and Christ and the Gospel, and possesses no power except as their representative. "The Pope," as he says in the longest and most important passage upon this point,[3] "is bound to believe, and under the same obligation in this respect as all other believers;[4] and when he believes as he is bound, then are all other believers bound to believe what he believes, not because he believes it, but *because he believes as he ought to believe.* And were the belief of another more sound, it would be the duty of the Pope to share it, even though that other were but a layman or a female, not because he was a layman, or because the female so believed, but because they were walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. Hence even Peter, when, Gal. ii., he did not walk in that way, was bound to believe in Paul, not because it was Paul who withstood him, or because he was subjected to Paul, but because Paul walked more uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. It hence follows that—although it is to be presumed that the Pope and the prelates will all the more likely walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, the higher and more exalted the station they occupy; so that when other circumstances are parallel, we ought rather to believe them than any of their subordinates[5]—their subjects are not abso-

[1] . . . nihil est, quod facit.

[2] Properly speaking, the Pope can only teach God's commandments, but not enjoin them in God's name; and therefore all the less has he authority (in things which relate to man's connection with God), to enjoin the dictates of his own will; for Christians are the servants not of the Pope but of God. De Sacram. Poenit. p. 807, Thes. 4.

[3] At the beginning of the work de Potest. eccles. p. 748.

[4] et obligatur cum omnibus obligatis fidelibus.

[5] . . . irrationabile et blasphemiae plenum; the latter because the faith of Christians is due to God only, and therefore were it to be subjected to the man, a human being would be substituted for God.

lutely bound to believe them. To say this would be so irrational and blasphemous, that it seems to me worse than any heresy. For a prelate, and the very highest of them all, the Pope, may err, as the first of them (Peter), although chosen and expressly nominated by the Lord Jesus himself, and filled with the Holy Spirit, certainly did err. This, however, was permitted by the Lord Jesus Christ, in order that we might know that we are not under obligation to believe any man, but only the Holy Spirit. And justly so; for faith, as it is a theological virtue, is subject to none but God, and takes hold only on him in whom the just live by faith. The life of the just would be in great peril indeed, if it were dependent upon the life (the mode of thinking and acting) of the Pope. For many of the Pontiffs have brought in highly pernicious errors, as, in recent times, it was shewn at Constance, in the celebrated council, what grievous wounds Benedict, Boniface, and John XXIII.[1] had inflicted upon the faith, and finally, in our own days, Pius II. and Sixtus IV., of whom the one,[2] in a public bull arrogated to himself the sovereignty of the world, and the other emitted the most shameful dispensations, releasing not merely from oaths already sworn in civil processes, but even from oaths that were yet to be sworn."[3] The Pope being thus fallible, is also liable to correction, and may be corrected by whosoever is wiser than himself. In a dispute between a *Pope* and a *wise Christian*, Wessel, without hesitation, decides in favour of the latter, because the judgment passed by such a Christian can be set aside by no Pope.[4] "In a case of dispute and contradiction between the Pope and a wise man, not only is the Pope bound to listen to and follow the wise man,

[1] The well-known schismatical Popes.

[2] *Pius* II., in the notorious *Bulla Retractationum*, in which he revokes the principles avouched by him as Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, and zealously upholds the absolute monarchy of the Pope. This Bull is to be found at the end of the Lib. iii. de. Concil. Basil. p. 149—160. ed Helmst. The passages p. 151 and 158—160 are in particular to be compared.

[3] See supra in the life of Wessel, p. 323. Mention is there made of a work, probably lost, in which he severely censures Sixtus IV., with whom he was formerly on good terms, for inconsiderately exonerating men from their oaths. Here he does the same in a work which still remains.

[4] De Potest. eccles. p. 766.

but the wise man, in the matter to which his wisdom refers, *i.e.*, in which he adheres in faith to the word of true wisdom, according to the unsullied law of the Lord, ought by no means to give up his conviction and follow the authority of the Pope. Nay, even the whole Church of the believers, recognising the true word of wisdom, ought to follow the wise man. This was lately done in the council at Constance, where the believers dissented from John XXIII., and agreed with *John Gerson*. And who is there this day, who, in a case of dissent and contradiction between Eugene and Bernard of Clairvaux, would not rather side with Bernard than with Eugene? In fact, Eugene himself has set us an example to this effect, by receiving so affectionately the severe admonitions and reproofs contained in the work de Consideratione. How far, therefore, the deliverances of the Popes are binding, is a point which the theologian has to settle, if he truly know his science."[1] Thus it is from the *Gospel* that the supreme and ultimate decision in the Church is to be derived, and he who most correctly interprets it, and most perfectly embraces it in faith, the accomplished Christian philosopher, the true *theologian*, as the organ of the gospel and prophet under the New Testament, is the man who, wherever he truly appears, is to be exalted above the priest.

The position which Wessel assigns to the *Pope*, is, on the whole, more *judicial* than religious and theological.[2] He is the highest defender of the Church's laws; his power is a supreme jurisdiction.[3] As such, however, it relates to things in respect of which one man can be subjected to the government of another,[4] and consequently to actions which have an external issue, and the circumstances and conditions of the Church which are apparent and demonstrable. The immediate connection between God and man, however, God has reserved to himself. For he who can know only as much of what takes place within a man as is outwardly evidenced, cannot judge of any thing more. What the Pope cannot know and determine respecting himself, he can as

[1] . . . si tamen vere theologisset.

[2] The following averments of Wessel are taken from his Theses at the beginning of the work de Purgatorio p. 826 and 827.

[3] Thes. 5: Omnis potestas Papae praerogativa . . . est mere jurisdictionalis.

[4] Thes. 13.

little decide in the case of others. If he do, his decision is null, and so is every action which flows from it.[1] This holds, in particular, in regard to the pardon of sin which the Pope guarantees.[2] But of that and other kindred matters, we shall specially treat in the doctrine of the Sacraments, to which we now pass.

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2. OF THE SACRAMENTS AS MEANS OF SALVATION, AND, IN PARTICULAR, OF THE HOLY SUPPER AND PENITENCE.

The doctrine of the Sacraments is the main point on which the Scholastic theology shewed a productive power both formally and materially. In the early times of Christianity, this doctrine was little elaborated, and for that very reason called for a more thorough cultivation. It was likewise, however, more intimately connected than all other dogmas with the life and worship of the Church, and might be quite specially used for the exaltation of the priesthood and the establishment of the hierarchy; and this was the chief ground why the theology of the middle ages devoted to it a peculiar attention. The intellectual power which Scholasticism developed here, as it did in other departments, is worthy of all acknowledgment, but is no justification of the corruptions which it introduced into the doctrine of the Church, and which are too visible to escape the notice of any one who chooses to see.

As Wessel took arms against Scholasticism principally on those points in which it was connected with ecclesiastical life, we might have expected from him statements respecting the Sacraments. And such statements we also find; but they relate more to the Lord's Supper and Penitence, the two which penetrated most deeply into the Ecclesiasticism of the time, and less to the idea and efficacy of Sacraments in general. On these topics he merely makes a few occasional remarks. He observes, for example, that Christ, in consecrating the Apostles, used no oil or chrism. He does not, however, disapprove of the Church having, for the promotion of the reverence and honour and more solemn dispensation of the Sacramental rites, ordained much which

[1] Thes. 14—19. [2] Thes. 20.

was not customary in the primitive age of Christianity.[1] This might appear indifferent to a spiritual mind like his. On the contrary, he contends very decidedly against the doctrine of the *efficacy of the Sacraments* (ex opere operato), which is morally pernicious, and was afterwards combated by the Reformers. He says,[2] The efficacy and fruit of the Sacraments depend, not merely upon the intention of the party who adminsters or of the party who partakes of them, but essentially upon the *participant's frame of mind.* The proper frame of mind is a hungering and thirsting after the life-giving bread and drink. Hence the less he hungers and thirsts, the less will be the effect he experiences. This is not indeed to be understood, as if the grace depended upon the running and willing of man, or were distributed according to desert; but it means, that only those who hunger and thirst after them, can be satisfied with the blessings. They receive according to the measure of their desire; and it does not depend upon the priest how much is received by him for whom the mass is offered. "Thus our salvation does not hang upon the act of another, but the kingdom is *within us*, and the nearer we draw to it, the more we reign. We draw near to it, however, not by the help of others, but by the steps of our own mind and desire. It is a spiritual kingdom, and hence requires a spiritual change. I do not here mean to say, that no one can reap saving fruit from another's prayers; but this cannot be done in any other way, than by the transforming action of the prayer upon his mind. In as far as his faith or the faith of him who offers the prayer draws near to the Divine being, which can only be done by a mental act, in so far does he receive fruit whether in regard to redemption, the pardon of sin, or satisfaction."[3] Indeed, Wessel ascribes so much value to *faith*, as the capacity for receiving Divine things, that he not only makes the amount of the grace to be received commensurate with it, but even finds in it a compensation, or equivalent for that which the Sacrament confers. "He who believes, feeds upon the body of Christ, even though it be nowhere externally offered to him. Of this, Paul the Hermit is a proof, who lived for so many years in the desert, and who, unless he had eaten the flesh of the Son of Man,

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 775.
[2] De Commun. Sanct. p. 817.
[3] In l. c. p. 818 and 819.

and drunk his blood, would have had no life in him. . . . . On the contrary, were the whole world to be offered for an individual who is himself inwardly reluctant, it would, by reason of his reluctance, avail little or nothing as a satisfaction. When it is said that a mass, celebrated for many, is less efficacious for any one of the number, than it would be if celebrated exclusively for that one, I reckon this to be false. It is efficacious for every one, in so far as he is spiritually changed and amended by it, not in so far as the celebrant desires.[1] . . . The merit of him who celebrates a mass or offers a prayer, does not always operate; as we clearly see in the prayers that are offered, that the Popes may lead an exemplary life; for here the intercession of the most pious men avails nothing, because the repugnant inclinations of the Popes themselves prevent.[2]"

The statements we find in Wessel's works respecting *particular sacraments* are of greater importance. We refer especially to the two which took the firmest hold upon the system of ecclesiastical life, but which had also both experienced and caused the greatest amount of corruption, and hence afforded the reformers the amplest theme of contradiction. These were the sacraments of the Supper and Penitence, with the relative doctrine on the subject of Indulgences, and it is of them we have now more fully to treat. The usual systematic order would require us to speak first of Penitence and then of the Supper; but as this is not essential for our exposition, which does not aim at a complete view of Wessel's doctrines, we prefer the inverse arrangement, because we shall then be able immediately to follow up the doctrine of Penitence and Indulgence with the kindred doctrine of Purgatory. Accordingly, we shall first state Wessel's views,

(a) *Of the Lord's Supper. Wessel and Zwingli.*

The doctrine of the *Sacrament of the Supper* belongs to those

[1] From this point of view, Wessel rejects, or characterises as useless, the institution of masses for single persons. De Commun. Sanctor. p. 816 sq.

[2] In l c. p. 819 and 820.

which, in the centuries preceding the Reformation, were discussed by most of the liberal-minded theologians, though it must be confessed, by almost all of them, in a one-sided way; inasmuch as they made the question respecting the mode of Christ's presence, the sole subject of inquiry. On this subject also the labours of the *Reformers* were facilitated by forerunners, who introduced a purification, revival, and spiritualising of the ecclesiastical creed, and of these Wessel was one. He expresses his opinion upon it incidentally in several of his works; and in particular in his treatises on Prayer, and on the Magnitude of the Passion of Christ. But he also composed a separate work, *de Sacramento Eucharistiae et de audienda Missa*,[1] which contains many ingenious thoughts. Before, however, we pass to a review of the principles which he enunciates, let us briefly call to mind the historical connection in which he stands, and observe how he here also forms one of the links of a progressive chain.

It is well known that on the path of a more free and vital conception of the doctrine of the Holy Supper, Wessel outstripped many of the theologians of earlier centuries; but from which of them it was that he chiefly caught and moulded his views, cannot be exactly determined, as he has made no express statement upon the subject. There is, however, room for conjecture, that it was *Rupert of Deutz*, respecting whom we know, both that in the earlier period of his life he entertained liberal views respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, and likewise that his writings were diligently studied and largely extracted from by Wessel.[2] Among Wessel's contemporaries, it is probable that John of Wesel may have had some influence on the formation of his views. Not only is this likely in itself, but it is also confirmed by an allusion to him[3] as an "acute teacher," in a passage[4] which at least remotely refers to the subject of the Sacrament. As, however, it is chiefly in his relation to the *Reformation* that we are contemplating Wessel, less importance attaches to the doctrinal

[1] In the Groeningen edition of his works, it occupies from p. 658—705, and contains 29 chapters.

[2] See supra, Life of Wessel, p. 285 and 286.

[3] See his view of the Supper, vol. i., p. 296, 349, and 350.

[4] De Magnitud. Passion. Cap. 39, p. 537.

tradition which brings us down to him, than to that which proceeds from him. Hitherto we have learned to know him chiefly as the forerunner of *Luther*. Here he appears decidedly as the pioneer of *Zwingli and the Reformed doctrine*, and this he does not merely in virtue of an inward analogy of opinion, but likewise, as is at least highly probable, by virtue of a clearly demonstrable concatenation of circumstances. The matter has not yet been set in a sufficiently clear light, but is too important not to be minutely expiscated.

If we imagine Wessel living 60 years later than he did, and his manhood coinciding with the time of the Reformation, and if we then enquire on which of the sides he would have taken his place, whether on that of the Reformers of Northern Germany or with those of Switzerland and the South, it is no doubt difficult to give a decided answer. Had he not possessed sufficient vigour of mind to pursue an independent and original course, he would have felt himself attracted towards both, as he was certainly connected by close affinity with both; still we cannot but believe that the attraction to the latter side would have predominated. For let us suppose that the general difference between the two consists in two points;—the first of these being a theoretical one, and to the effect, that Luther and his fellows adhere with the strictest earnestness to the letter of Scripture, even when the letter seems to conflict with the reason, whereas, on the contrary, Zwingli and his friends, with all their steadfast adherence to the letter, endeavoured to explain its *meaning* more spiritually and rationally; so that the former are decidedly realists, supra-naturalists, and in certain cases even, literalists, whereas the latter have a certain measure of spiritualism, idealism, and rationalism. While the second has its seat in the practice of the reformers, which in the case of Luther, maintains a more historical character, urges in the first instance only the essentials of faith, and, from indulgence to the conscience of the individual, seeks only a gradual remodelling of externals, whereas the practice of Zwingli exhibits a more radical character, sets up Scripture as an objective rule, overleaps the intermediate historical links, and endeavours to bring all things back at once to the condition of the primitive Church; so that while Luther in doctrine is more objective, and in practice more subjective, Zwingli is the very reverse,—If, we repeat, we

recognise these as the radical differences between the two tendencies, there may be room for doubt as respects the sphere of practice, whether Wessel would have preferred the historical and gradual policy, or the radical and the sudden. We could not say that deeply-rooted historical piety would have restrained him, as it did Luther, from the latter. As regards theory, however, if we except the particular doctrines which relate to the redemption, and in which he is predominantly Lutheran, the whole tendency of his mind ranks him with the Swiss and South-German party. With all his firm adherence to the letter of Scripture, in opposition to tradition and ecclesiastical authority, he yet, in the interpretation of it, spiritualises to a considerable extent, and has a certain tinge of idealism and philosophy, in short something which the strictly orthodox and practical Luther, in the later days of his life, termed fanaticism. This is evinced not merely in the doctrine of purgatory, but in the article from which the process of separation between the Lutheran and Reformed confessions originated, namely, that of the Lord's Supper. Here we must decidedly number Wessel among the founders of the *Reformed doctrine;* and not Wessel only. The *Netherlands* and Rhine districts seem to have been at the time the seat and hearth of similar views. Even *Erasmus*, and others with whom we shall become acquainted in the sequel, must be inserted in the list.[1] This will also serve to explain the fact that in after times, when it was fully elaborated, the Reformed doctrine received so favourable a reception in the Netherlands. It then only returned full-grown to the place in whose maternal soil it had struck its first roots.

The more intimate connection of the facts is as follows:[2] Among the remains of a person who was one of Wessel's more familiar

[1] This appears in particular from certain remarkable statements of Melancthon. In a letter to Camerarius of 26th July, 1529, Opp. ed. Bretschneider, I. 1083, he says: Tota illa tragoedia *περὶ δείπνου κυριακοῦ* ab ipso (Erasmo) nata videri potest. And in another to Aquila, 12 Oct. 1529, Opp. iv., 970: *Cinglius* mihi confessus est, se ex *Erasmi* scriptis primum hausisse opinionem suam de coena Domini. See also in *Gieseler* K. G. III. i. p. 193, not. 28, other statements of Erasmus on this subject.

[2] According to the narrative of *Hardenberg* in the fragmentary Biographical notices respecting Wessel, prefixed to the Amsterdam edition, p. 12—14.

friends, and with whom he had carried on a literary correspondence on various subjects, Jacob *Hoeck*, the Dean of Naeldwick, there was found an essay on *the Lord's supper* (de Coena), which was ascribed by several learned men to Wessel's pen, while others maintained that it was more than two centuries old, and had been transmitted from hand to hand.[1] The chief agent in the discovery was Cornelius *Honius* (Hoen), a distinguished jurist and a man of evangelical sentiments,[2] who subsequently, in 1523, expiated his attachment to the cause of a free Gospel by imprisonment for several years. He committed this treatise, with other writings of Wessel which he had found either among Hoeck's remains, or in the Monastery of St Agnes, to two friends, John *Rhodius* and George *Sagarus*,[3] of whom only the former is particularly known, as the pious and learned superintendent of the Brother-house at Utrecht,[4] in order that they might be conveyed to Luther at Wittemberg. At the same time he accompanied it with a disquisition, which is still extant, from his own pen on the same subject.

We know that, in 1522, if not probably in the preceding year, a collection of Wessel's writings appeared under the editorship of Luther at Wittemberg. These were what Rhodius and Sagarus had brought to him. The fact admits of no doubt. Hardenberg, however, proceeds to relate other circumstances, from which it would appear, that the treatise de Coena became the first occasion of the *dispute* on the subject of the *Lord's Supper* between *Luther* and *Carlstadt;* and respecting these, doubts may be entertained. His narrative is as follows :[5] "Rhodius, in his own name, and that

[1] Ibid. p. 13.

[2] He was the friend of *Erasmus*, who calls him Vir optimus. Epist. T. i. p. 766. This circumstance may explain the connection of Erasmus with the doctrine of the Supper taught by the Reformers. Respecting Hoen, compare *Gerdes* Hist. Evang. renov. i. 229—30.

[3] Gerdes and others call him *Saganus*, but there can be no doubt that the correct form of the name is *Sagarus*. He seems to have been a relative of that *William Sagarus* who was so enthusiastic an admirer of Wessel.

[4] Respecting *Rhodius*, William *Gnapheus* remarks in the Hist. Martyrii Joh. Pistorii both in the preface and the work itself p. 2 : Eum vindicandae veritati Evangelicae *crebris in Germaniam profectionibus vacasse*.

[5] In l. c. p. 13.

of others, begged of Luther that he would sanction the doctrine respecting the Lord's Supper, expounded in the treatise; but to this, apprehensive of every profanation of the sacrament, Luther would not consent. At the dinner-table, Carlstadt joined in imploring him to adopt the views, and write against the carnal participation; but as Luther firmly refused, Carlstadt falling into a passion, exclaimed, If you will not do it, I will, though not so fit for the task. Whereupon Luther took a gold piece from his purse, and threw it to the place where Carlstadt was sitting, saying, See, there is a gold piece for you, attempt it if you dare! Carlstadt took the money, rose from the table, and began to write to the best of his ability at the time." That this was the commencement of the controversy respecting the supper, Hardenberg pretends to have also heard confirmed by the mouth of Melancthon and Thomas Blaurer, who was a burgomaster of Constance, and at the time Luther's guest at dinner. The narrative acquires credibility by its liveliness, and the witnesses whom Hardenberg adduces. An objection[1] may be made to it, however, on the ground that it confounds one occurrence with another, that it was not till long after, in the August of 1524, and at Jena, (and here also we have the testimony of one who was present,) that the challenge with the piece of money was given. Now it may be disputed, whether or not the preacher Reinhardt of Jena, who is the reporter in the last case,[2] and shared the opinions of Carlstadt, is a more credible witness than Rhodius, Hardenberg, and the rest to whom Hardenberg here appeals; and it is certain that Luther at least was not at all satisfied with Reinhardt's account.[3] Even, however, though we suppose that the affair of the piece of money did take place at Jena, it is still conceivable that Hardenberg does not so much confound the two occurrences, as partially mingle the one with the other, and that,

[1] As is done by *Gieseler* K. Gesch. iii. 1. p. 190 not. 24.

[2] See the so called Acta Jenensia oder Mart. *Reinhardts*, Predigers zu Jena, Bericht von der Handlung zwischen D. Luther'n und D. Carlstaden—in Luthers Werken, Walch xv. 2423—31, esp. p. 2430. The account is by no means drawn up in Luther's favour.

[3] He speaks of it in letters to Spalatin in Aurif. Ep. Luth. p. 234. b. and p. 237 a. See Luthers Werke v. Walch xv., 2432 and *Planck* Gesch. des prot. Lehrbegr. ii. 208.

excepting in the single trait of the gold piece which belongs to Jena, his narrative is correct. This certainly derives probability from various other circumstances. In the first place, it cannot be supposed that Hardenberg had caught in the air a matter which he supports on such good authorities.[1] In the second place, the story tallies perfectly with the circumstances. Luther might very well have invited some of his friends and colleagues, among whom at the time Carlstadt stood high, to meet with the strangers from the Netherlands at dinner. It was natural, that there the conversation should fall upon the literary treasure which the Dutchmen had brought along with them, and in particular, upon the treatise on the important doctrine of the Supper, on which the strangers were also the bearers of the work of Honius. This proved the occasion of bringing to light a disagreement in opinion between the colleagues, who afterwards became so hostile to each other; and in such a company, even the affair of the gold piece, as a wanton convivial jest, would find a more congenial place, than in the painful scene of altercation which occurred in the inn at Jena, after they had become declared enemies. Thirdly, in the edition of Wessel's works which was shortly after set on foot, either by Luther himself, or at least under his authority, the treatise on the Supper was not admitted—a proof that he did not approve of some of its contents, however reformatory these might be in other respects. On the other hand, we find Carlstadt's doctrine of the Supper in a short time developing itself in all its peculiarity, although from slender rudiments and in progressive degrees. In fine, in connection with this matter, a statement of Luther's, which has been hitherto overlooked, in his letter to the Christians of Strasburg, 15th Dec. 1524,[2] appears to me highly worthy of attention. The Reformer there says, "I will confess that had Dr Carlstadt, or any one else, been able *five years ago* to show me that there is nothing in the sacrament but bread and wine, he

[1] He himself says at the end of the narrative, p. 14, that he had given it as it had been delivered to him by Rhodius, Goswin, and Thomas Blaurer, and appeals to the latter as the best witness, if he be still alive, for: interim velim illis credi, ut viris bonis; mihi saltem, ut fideli relatori.

[2] In de Wette Th. 2. p. 577. In Walch xv. 2448.

would have done me a very great service. My trials have been so severe, and my struggles and exertions upon the point so violent, that I would fain have escaped from them, as I well saw that I could thereby have given the severest blow to the Papacy. *There were also two who wrote to me upon the subject far more ably than Dr Carlstadt, and without, like him, torturing the word according to their own fancy.* But I am shut up, and cannot escape. The text is far too strong, and will not suffer itself to be wrenched from its meaning by words." *Who then are the two who had written to Luther about the Lord's Supper more ably* than Carlstadt? I know not if others more familiar with the history of the Reformation could here refer to facts[1] that would better tally: but as long as this has not been done, I shall believe that Luther is here thinking of the *disquisition of Honius*, which was expressly addressed to him, and of the *treatise of Wessel*, which was at least sent for his particular use. Here every circumstance perfectly accords; the two treatises actually contain what the statement of Luther presupposes; they give an explanation of the Lord's Supper, which is simpler, and does less violence to the language than Carlstadt's; Luther, however, could not be convinced, and rejected the essays; and he assigns a time in in his letter which coincides exactly enough with that of the mission of Rhodius to Wittemberg. In the latter respect, it is true, the matter cannot indeed be determined with apodictical certainty, but yet the truth may be approximated with great probability. Luther says "Had any one been able, five years ago, to shew me,"—and we might infer from the words that the writings of the two had reached him five years before. This may possibly have been the case, for nothing forbids us to suppose that Rhodius was at Wittemberg in 1519. The vagueness of the language, however, permits us to date the writings of the two indefinitely *about* that time and therefore in the year 1520. This, however, and no later, appears to be the time in which it is necessary, at any rate, to fix the journey of Rhodius to Wittemberg; for if, as is probable, the first collection of Wessel's writings appeared in 1521, they must necessarily have been in Wittemberg in 1520, in order that the printing might be set on

[1] Neither Walch nor De Wette give any explanation.

foot and completed, this having been then a tardier operation than at present.

In this manner all conspires to corroborate the statement of Hardenberg, and we hold the facts to be certain, On the one hand, that Luther, however keenly rejoicing over Wessel's works which became known to him in the very midst of his reformatory career, did not allow either his treatise on the Supper, or yet the accompanying letter of Honius, to win him to a more spiritual conception of this doctrine, the text even then appearing to him far too strong; And on the other, that these writings were the first occasion of bringing to light a disagreement between Luther and Carlstadt,[1] which was no doubt, at the first, outweighed by the consciousness of essential accordance with each other, so much so that even Carlstadt ingenuously begged of Luther, as the abler of the two, to write upon the subject, but which in the course of a few years became an open rupture, and led to that scene at Jena, which is related to the table-talk at Wittemberg as a passionate quarrel is to a brotherly dispute.

What Luther rejected was adopted by *Zwingli*. Rhodius, as Hardenberg proceeds to relate,[2] bent his way in the first place to *Oecolampadius*, with a letter from Luther to his South-German friend, beseeching him to state his opinion of the questionable treatise upon the Lord's Supper. "Oecolampadius, shy and modest as he was, did not dare openly to declare his sentiments, when he heard that Luther disapproved of the contents of the work. He therefore sent Rhodius on to Zwingli at Zurich. Zwingli was pleased with the doctrine, to which he even appears to have had a previous bias, and having first taken the opinion of various doctors,[3] adopted and defended it. Ere long Oecolampadius also came forward more boldly, which was highly dis-

[1] We do not mean by this to affirm, what Gieseler justly designates as incorrect, (K. Gesch. iii. 1, s. 190, Anmerk. 24), that Carlstadt derived the substance of his doctrine of the Supper from the works of Honius and Wessel; but merely that these were the occasion of his giving to it a more definite shape, and of making him conscious of its difference from that of Luther. Comp. *Goebel* über Carlstadts A. M. Lehre in the Stud. u. Krit. 1842. Heft 2.

[2] In l. c. s. 14.

[3] For example, of his old teacher Wyttenbach. See infra p. 515.

pleasing to Luther; and so began those painful conflicts!" Such are the words of Hardenberg, and here also we shall find his statement substantially corroborated.

To shew this we start from an undoubted fact. In the year 1825, Zwingli himself published the letter of Honius upon the Lord's Supper, of which Rodius had been the bearer.[1] He says in the preface, that four years ago it had been sent from the Netherlands, *ad quendam, apud quem omne judicium sacrae scripturae fuit*, but had been repudiated by him, and that it handled the subject of the Lord's Supper in quite a different way from what had hitherto been customary.[2] By the man who, although qualified in every way to judge of Scripture, had repudiated the doctrine, Zwingli, as there can be no doubt, means Luther. The four years, which he mentions, are got by supposing that the two Dutchmen tarried at various places on the way, and arrived at Zurich in 1521, having probably been at Wittemberg in 1520.

That the two travellers, and, still more, the works of which they were the bearers, had a decided influence upon *Zwingli's* views of the Holy Supper, is certified by a countryman of his own who lived not many years later, we speak of Louis Lavater.[3] His notice is as follows: "It happened that John *Rhodius* and George *Sagarus*,[4] two pious and learned men, arrived at Zurich for the purpose of conferring with Zwingli upon the Lord's Supper. Having heard his opinion, before they had declared their own, they praised God for delivering them from so great an error, and then produced the epistle of the Dutchman Honius, in which the '*is*' in the words of the institution is interpreted '*signifies*,' the explanation which ap-

[1] *v. d. Hardt* Autogr. Lutheri iii. 127. A reprint of it is to be found in *Gerdes* Hist. Evang. renov. i. 231—240.

[2] The superscription runs: Epistola Christiana admodum, ab annis quatuor ad quendam, apud quem omne judicium sacrae scripturae fuit, ex Batavis missa, sed spreta, longe aliter tractans coenam dominicam, quam hactenus tractata est . . . per Honnium Batavum.

[3] Ludov. *Lavateri* Hist. de origine et progr. controvers. sacrament. Tigur. 1564, p. 1. b. Lavater, born the 1st March 1527 at Kyburg, † as Antistes at Zurich the 15th Jul. 1586.

[4] Lavater has Saganus, but here too, as there can be no doubt, we must read Sagarus.

peared also to Zwingli the most proper."[1] The certainty of this influence, however, is confirmed by what we know of the growth of Zwingli's opinions on the doctrine of the Supper. It is true that his modern biographers suppose him, even when at Glarus, to have borrowed his liberal views on the subject from the works of Ratramnus and Wickliffe;[2] but they adduce no proof of this statement, and what Zwingli himself tells us about the matter, dates from a time when he was already acquainted with the essays of the two Dutchmen. First of all, in an epistle to his teacher Wyttenbach,[3] 15th June 1523, he handles the doctrine as something mysterious, calling it a pearl which ought not to be cast before swine. Nevertheless, even herewe find the germ from which his whole theory subsequently grew, namely, the thought that it is essentially by *faith* that we feed upon Christ. Zwingli says, The Eucharist is celebrated wherever faith is exercised,[4] for the purpose of its institution was, that we should praise the fruit grace and gift, of the death of Christ, till he come. The case with the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper is the same as with the water in baptism.[5] The man who does not believe may be washed a thousand times, but it will be all in vain; whereas faith is never in vain. In the same way, the bread and the wine will be given to no purpose, unless he who feeds upon them firmly believes, that they are the only food of the soul, and unless he is convinced that the body of Christ, which was delivered unto death, delivers us from Satan, death, and sin. For what can nourish our soul so well as steadfast and unshaken hope? This word is the bread and the meat of which Jesus speaks in John vi. Whoever, in his inmost soul, feeds by true faith on this food, eats, at every repetition of the act, to the strengthening and refreshing of his

[1] . . . in qua *est* in verbis institutionis Coenae Dominicae per *significat* explicatur, quae interpretatio *Zwinglio* commodissima videbatur.

[2] Hess Leben Zwingli's übers. v. Usteri s. 21; Huldr. Zwingli von Schuler s. 24; Hess Samml. zur Beleucht. der schweiz. K. u. Ref. Gesch. i. 20. On the opposite side, *Gieseler* K. G. iii. 1. s. 192, not. 27.

[3] Opp. Lat. Vol. vii. p. 297—300.

[4] p. 297: Eucharistiam illic edi puta, *ubi fides est.*

[5] Ibid. p. 298.

faith, if that be still weak, and to the satisfying and enlivening of it, if it be already strong. It is true, we call the thing by its proper name, viz., the bread bread, and the wine wine. But just as we say, that baptism washes away sin, although it is not the water, but faith which produces the effect, so may we also metaphorically *(per catachresin)* call the bread and wine the body and the blood of Christ, because it is Christ who by his body and blood has liberated and cleansed us, not that the bread and wine do this, but the faith which Christ has commanded us to have in his redeeming and purifying death. Bread and wine are the Eucharist only in the using *(in usu)*,[1] not apart from that; for Christ, to whom it belongs either to be in heaven at the right hand of the Father, or upon earth in the believing soul, is not in the bread in and of itself, but only when he is the object of faith's longing and seeking, as the fire is not in the flint in and of itself, but only when the flint is struck by the steel.[2] About the manner in which Christ is given to him in the bread, the believer has no need anxiously to enquire, for here everything stands in faith, and where faith exists, either the participant satisfies his mind, or if not, then is he not so much of a believer as he ought to be.—Shortly after, Zwingli came forward more openly with his doctrine. He treats it afresh in his exposition of the 18th article of the Schlussreden,[3] written in July 1523. Here he rejects transubstantiation, the notion of a sacrifice, and the refusal of the cup to the laity, and calls for the restoration of the pure doctrine of Scripture on the subject of the Holy Supper. He likes best to designate the sacrament of the altar the "recollection and renewal of that transaction which once took place on earth, but which is efficacious in eternity;" but has no objections if any please, with Luther, to call it a 'Testament,'[4] in respect that in the body and blood of Christ on which we feed in the Holy Supper, we receive a most firm assurance and certain pledge that through Christ we have become the children of God. His principal object, however, is to explain what eating the flesh and blood of Christ in

[1] Ibid. p. 299.

[2] Ibid. p. 300.

[3] Zwingli's Werke v. Schuler und Schulthess, deutsche Schriften I, 242 ff.

[4] Ibid. s. 249.

the Sacrament means; and here again he repeats his main statements, namely, that Christ in the Supper is the food of the soul, and that it is by faith we feed upon Him. "I care nothing," says Zwingli,[1] "for what the theologians have invented of a transubstantiation of the wine and the bread. Enough for me that I certainly know by faith that He is my redemption and my soul's food and consolation." With reference to John vi. 33, he unfolds the following thoughts:[2] Christ teaches that His Word is the food of the soul, as bread is strength to the body. The highest, most certain, and most peculiar saying of Christ, and through Him, of God, is, that He has given His body to wash and purify the soul. Nothing can uplift and strengthen the soul more than the firm belief that Christ has suffered death in its behalf. The food of the soul is, therefore, the assurance that Christ is its salvation in the sight of God. Hence in respect, that He intended to give Himself a sacrifice for salvation, Christ at John vi. 51, designates His flesh as the bread which he will give, and says (53—56), Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, *i.e.*, If you do not place your consolation in the death of Christ, who is your life, there is no life in you. If, however, you surely believe, that my flesh and blood, slain and shed, has delivered and purified you from sin, you shall live for ever; and in order that no one might in any wise think of a bodily eating and drinking, but clearly know that, in his language, the words flesh and blood mean the word of faith as being the food of the soul, Christ (ver. 60—63) adds, It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, &c. "Behold then, O pious Christian," concludes Zwingli,[3] "the body and blood of Christ are nothing else but the word of faith, to wit, that his body slain and his blood shed for us have redeemed and reconciled us to God. If we firmly believe that, then is our soul fed and refreshed with the flesh and blood of Christ." These propositions contain all the main parts of the Zwinglian doctrine; Christ is the salvation of the world and of every individual sinner, essentially by his death, or, in other words, by his body that was slain and by his

[1] Ibid. s. 253.

[2] Ibid. s. 251—53. [3] Ibid. s. 252.

blood that was shed. The salvation is conveyed to us through the channel of the word, and the word we can appropriate only by means of faith. In so far as we do this in a vital way, it becomes to us the highest refreshment and nutrition, the food of the soul unto eternal life. The feeding on the body and blood of Christ thus means, to receive Christ, as the victim delivered for our salvation into the soul, by faith, as its food. Other statements, subsequently made by Zwingli on this subject, result of themselves from these. We refer to his interpretation of the words of the institution, and to his discrimination of a spiritual, from a sacramental feeding on the body of Christ. On the stand-point we have indicated, no other than a figurative interpretation of these words[1] was possible; and as we can at all times feed upon Christ by faith, the only way of vindicating anything peculiar to the Lord's Supper, was to draw a distinction between the general and spiritual, and the special and sacramental fruition of the body of Christ, things which, although not specifically, are yet in degree and form different.[2]

If we now enquire in what way this doctrine developed itself in the mind of Zwingli, we may consider it as a deduction from his general views of Christianity, and there stop short. In such matters, however, special historical influences almost always operate; and it is manifest that the theory of Zwingli was but the development of a germ which had long been in process of growth. Where, then, is the point of which he at first took hold? The references of his biographers to Ratramnus, Wickliffe, and even Peter Waldo, are far-fetched, uncertain, and wavering. On the other hand, we have before us what are

[1] First, as it appears, in a letter to Matth. Alberus, Preacher at Reutlingen v. 16. Nov. 24th, Opp. iii. 589, then in Comment. de vera et falsa religione, March 25th, Opp. iii. 239 sqq. In the first passage he says, p. 598: Nos cardinem hujus rei in brevissima syllaba versari arbitramur: videlicet in hoc verbo *est*, cujus significantia non perpetuo pro *esse* accipitur, sed etiam pro *significare*, etc.

[2] The sacramental eating, on which the spiritual is founded, consists in adjuncto sacramento mente ac spiritu corpus Christi edere. The merely sacramental, without the spiritual, which gives to the sacramental all its worth and fulness, is found among them, qui visibile sacramentum sive symbolum publice quidem comedunt, sed domi fidem non habent. Exposit. Christ. fid. p. 47.

undoubtedly historical facts, namely, the letter of *Honius*, which Zwingli himself published, and with which he became acquainted in 1521, and the treatise of Wessel, of which that letter was the accompaniment. These two writings, however, contain almost all the ideas on the subject of the Supper which Zwingli elaborated into a more distinct whole. From what other source, then, can his ideas have been derived? Or, supposing that he did not actually borrow them from these writings, still there can be little doubt that the sentiments of others must have helped to deepen his conviction of his own. We may therefore unhesitatingly assert, that the writings in question either first led Zwingli to his view of the Lord's Supper, or, if that were before formed in his mind, so greatly assisted him in moulding it, that we are justified in regarding them as the main source of the theory which bears his name.

This will appear, if we state the contents of the two documents, which will bring us back to what is our proper object, namely, an exposition of the doctrines of Wessel upon the Lord's Supper.

Honius starts, as Zwingli afterward does, from the sayings of Christ in John vi.[1] His words are: Christ has instituted the Holy Supper in order that the soul may firmly believe that she really has a Bridegroom of her own, who gave himself for her, and shed for her his precious blood. By this means she is induced to avert her affections from the objects which she formerly loved, to fix them on Christ alone, and to make him her chief good. This means, as the Saviour says, (John vi.,) to feed upon Christ and to drink his blood; and whoever partakes of the Lord's Supper, without such faith, feeds rather upon the manna of the Jews than upon Christ. Of this quickening faith, the schoolmen of the Romish Church knew nothing. They inculcated a dead faith, which, being merely historical, could not save. They imagined it sufficient to assert, and artificially, but without Scriptural proof, to shew, that the bread after consecration is the true body of Christ. In this belief, they paid to it divine honour, which, if God be not in the bread, differs little from the reverence paid by the heathen to stocks and stones.[2] They allege, in-

[1] See a reprint of his Epistola in *Gerdes* Hist. Evang. renov. i. p. 232.

[2] An allusion to what was afterwards expressed roughly in the 80th question of the Heidelberg Catechism.

deed, that they have the word of God, which says, This is my body. Yes, says Honius, you have the word of God, that same word which you have used to uphold the Romish tyranny in the text, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth', and so on. All depends, however, upon how the word is understood. The Lord has forbidden us to believe those who say, Lo, here is Christ, or lo there. Consequently, I ought not to believe them who tell us, that Christ is in the bread. If I do not listen to the Lord's warning, I cannot excuse myself as being the victim of deception, for these are now the perilous times which He foretold. The Apostles spoke in a different way of this sacrament. They broke bread, and called it bread, and all observed the most perfect silence about that which Rome believes. Nor does St Paul object,[1] when in 1 Cor. x. he speaks of the bread as the communion of the body of Christ. He does not say, The bread is the body of Christ. It is rather evident, that in this passage '*is*' must be taken for '*signifies*,' which may be clearly inferred from the comparison between the bread and the sacrifices to idols. Something, of which he does not at all aver that it is transmuted, *is* yet to him, that is, '*signifies*' to him, a fellowship with the devil, to whom it is offered. . . . That Christ was once to become man, was foretold by the prophets, demonstrated as a fact by himself, and preached as such by the apostles; but that he was daily to become bread under the hands of every sacrificing priest, was foretold neither by prophets nor apostles, but is founded upon the single expression, 'This is my body.' But it is strange[2] that they do not also assert that John the Baptist was transmuted into Elias, seeing that Christ says of him, This *is* Elias; or the Evangelist John into Christ, seeing that the Lord upon the Cross says to his mother respecting him, Behold thy son. I know that custom is to blame for the alarm felt at an interpretation of the words of the institution which elsewhere is adopted without scruple, but I cannot find any good ground for the difference. Many other texts might be adduced, in which Christ calls himself a door, a way, and a corner-stone, or says, I am the vine, and so forth; and yet no one cleaves so stoutly to the letter as to maintain that

[1] Ibid. p. 233.
[2] Ibid. p. 233 and 34.

Christ is a real and natural vine. At least, I am aware of no other ground, why we are so straitened in interpreting the words of the institution, but the authority of the Pope.

In the sequel Honius uses the following arguments,[1] to refute the doctrine of transubstantiation: Experience shows that the consecrated bread is liable to destruction, as, for example, by mice. It therefore cannot be Christ, for the Holy one of God is to "see no corruption." Even granting that Christ, in instituting the Holy Supper, really had transmuted the bread or combined with it his body, we shall not find a similar miracle performed a second time, either by Christ or the apostles; and though Christ did it, it does not follow that every priest can do the same. The words: Do this in remembrance of me, invest priests with no such power. The doctrine of transubstantiation would be a very important article, but not a word is said of it in what is called the Apostles' Creed.[2] It is to be found only in the Decretals; And this very circumstance strengthens the suspicion that it is a Papal invention, and all the more when we reflect, that it serves as a basement to the whole Papal religion. Christ is only seen in *faith*, and only worshipped in *faith*;[3] and that this may all the more certainly be the case, he has withdrawn from us his visible presence, and said, "If I go not away, the Spirit or Paraclete, will not come unto you." But Satan, to turn all things upside down, has again persuaded men of a bodily presence, though not in the human form, yet in the form of bread. If, however, God is believed to be in the bread, then must the worship paid to him also be external. Hence the costly monstrance, the splendid temple with all its decorations, the lamps and tapers, the sacred garments interwoven with linen and gold, the choral chant of the monks, the unction and celibacy of the priests, the withdrawal of a part of the Sacrament from the laity. In short, take but transubstantiation away, and the whole religion of the Pope falls to pieces.[4] And that it will one day fall, who can doubt, seeing that so considerable a part of it is already overthrown?

[1] p. 235—39.

[2] In Symbolo, *ut ajunt*, Apostolico.

[3] p. 237: Christus sola fide cernitur, sola fide colitur.

[4] p. 237: Si illud subtraxeris, ruet universa religio Papae, quam aliquando casuram, quis dubitabit?

It was the intention of Christ, as Honius proceeds positively to state,[1] to give *himself* to us in the bread.[2] He meant to say, Do not despise this bread which I present: It *signifies my body* which I give for you. When my body shall hang upon the cross, it shall hang there for you. Yea, all I have done or shall still do, shall be yours. There is thus strong consolation in the words, and when rightly understood and embraced, they are inexpressibly sweet. Let us distinguish, therefore, between the bread which we receive with the mouth, and Christ whom we receive in *faith*. For he who leaves this undone, and supposes that he receives nothing more than what he takes into his lips, discerns not the body of the Lord, and eats and drinks judgment to himself, because by eating and drinking, he avouches that Christ is present with him, while yet, by his unbelief, he is far from Christ. . . . We must listen to God's whole word, and only to God's word.[3] No option is left us; and all doctrine forbidden apart from the word of Christ. What would it profit thy brother wert thou to eat all the consecrated hosts and drink all the consecrated wine? You say, I have the word of the Lord, Do this in remembrance of me,—as if the Lord at the same Supper had not abundantly taught what he requires us to do, as all stands written at John xiii.—xviii. Beware of false prophets and of false Christs! Of old they used to say, I am the disciple of Thomas, and I of Scotus, and I of Augustine or St Francis. But now they say I am of Christ, and yet all the while they tear their brother to pieces, are avaricious, selfish, forgetful of God, and eager in the pursuit of nothing less than love.

After still farther complaining,[4] that while the Papal statutes are urged with zeal, the whole practical side of Christianity, that which the Lord inculcated in his Sermon on the Mount, is unpardonably neglected, or only delivered in a cold, mechanical, and spiritless way, he concludes with the words: "These things, pious reader, we have written to thee in haste. The true participation of the body and blood of Christ shall soon, if it be

[1] p. 238—40.

[2] Dominus per panem se ipsum tradit nobis.

[3] p. 239.

[4] p. 240.

God's will, see the light.[1] Meanwhile pray thou, that our faith do not fail, but that, like the true sheep, we may hear the voice of the true shepherd and not that of strangers!" It is possible that, by the writing that was soon to appear Honius meant Wessel's treatise; but he may also have been thinking of one of his own.

We now pass to that treatise, but have first to settle a critical question. Hitherto we have spoken of the second of the essays brought by Rhodius and his companion to Luther and Zwingli, as if it were unhesitatingly to be reckoned a work of Wessel's. But on this point doubts arise. In the first place, it might be supposed, that the men were the bearers of a single treatise, and that it was the one found among the papers of *Hoeck*, which was perhaps more than 200 years old, and in that case, of course, the work neither of Honius nor of Wessel. This opinion is intimated by Gerdes.[2] It is, however, untenable. For not only in Zwingli's edition of the one treatise, but in the notice of Lavater, Honius is expressly called its author, and from his work we must clearly distinguish that which was found among the remains of Hoeck. It may be further questioned whether the latter is from the pen of Wessel or not. Some asserted that it is, others considered it greatly older, and Hardenberg will not venture to decide upon the subject.[3] In forming an opinion, we must again keep two things apart; the one a list of propositions upon the subject, under the double title of (1) Propositiones ex Evangelio de corpore et sanguine Christi sumendo, quo fructu sumentium, et de veritate ejus, (2) Quomodo operamur cibum, qui non perit, et quod credere in Christum sit opus cibi non pereuntis, et credens vivit fide, vivens resuscitatur in novissimo die—and the other the larger work, De Sacramento Eucharistiae, itself. That double list of theses is to be found even in what appears to be the oldest edition of the[4] Farrago rerum theologicarum, printed at Wit-

[1] Veram dominici corporis manducationem et sanguinis potationem brevi emissuri, si id voluerit Deus.

[2] Hist. Evang. renov. i. 230, not. c.

[3] He says, p. 13: Quod neque probo, neque improbo; non nego, neque adfirmo.

[4] Fol. xxv., xxvi., xxvii.

temberg, and then likewise in the two of 1522 and 1523, published by Adam Petri at Basle.[1] Of this piece we may be perfectly certain, both that it is from the pen of Wessel, and also that it was known to Zwingli in the year 1521, and consequently that it may have influenced his views. On the other hand, there is not the same certainty respecting the larger treatise de Eucharistia. Of the one point, indeed, that it proceeds from Wessel, no one acquainted with his writings can doubt; for, irrespective of the fact that we may with high probability infer from the life of Gerhard Geldenhauer,[2] that he had written at great length upon the subject of the Supper, the work, although, like several other treatises, it made its appearance no earlier than 1614 in the Gröningen, and, in 1617, in the Amsterdam complete edition of the works, exhibits on every page, in thought and expression, the almost inimitable impress of his mind, contains a considerable number of propositions which we find in his other writings, and, as a whole, is only a more enlarged demonstration of the doctrines stated in the Theses which it also incorporates.[3] On the other point, however, namely, whether Zwingli was acquainted with the essay, we have not equal certainty. The surest voucher of this would have been the insertion of the piece into the editions of Wessel's works published at Basle by Adam Petri; for, according to Hardenberg,[4] the works brought by Rhodius to Zurich, were

[1] In both editions Fol. xxvi—xxix.

[2] Geldenhauer, who, after labouring in Strasburg, Augsburg, and Marburg, departed this life in 1542, himself (according to *Adami* Vit. Theolog. Germ. p. 44) relates: that he had diligently read the writings of *Wessel*, who died thirty years before the outbreak of the sacramental contest, and had caught from them the first light of Christian knowledge; but that, in order not to be overborne by human authority, he had then laid them aside, and studied the New Testament more than any other book, for the purpose of noting all the texts, in which mention is made, by even a single word, of the *body and blood of Christ*. It is manifest, that he here alludes to written statements of *Wessel* respecting the Holy Supper. And nothing is more natural than to suppose, that he had the then extant treatise de Eucharistia, which in that case must have been recognized as a production of Wessel in the first decennium of the sixteenth century.

[3] De Eucharist. c. 27 and 28. p. 700—704 of the Amsterdam Edit.

[4] Lebensnachrichten von Wessel p. 14.

given to Petri, and used by him for these editions. In neither of them, however, is the work de Eucharistia to be found; But this would not decide the question in the negative, for Petri might have had reasons for excluding it from his little collection, though he had the work in his hand. Even supposing, however, that it was not yet known in Switzerland, Zwingli might still learn from the Theses of Wessel, which were unquestionably under his inspection, their author's peculiar view of the Lord's Supper, and as between that view and his own, there is so great an inward agreement, nothing is more likely than that in this matter Wessel as well as Honius influenced his mind.

Even in the *Theses* we find the following fundamental thoughts variously applied and often repeated: The words of Christ are not to be understood carnally, but spiritually: when Christ says, He who believeth on Me hath eternal life, and Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you—the two things cannot be different. Accordingly, *believing* means eating the flesh of Christ, as it also means coming to him and taking him into the heart. The flesh of Christ, as the bread of life, which doth not perish, is not a thing palpable to sense, but signifies his whole being, word, love, sacrifice, and body slain for the salvation of the world. The knowledge of him, and through him of God, and the eating of his flesh, consists essentially in union with Christ through the *Fides* and *Commemoratio*,—consists in our doing what the Magdalene did, sitting at his feet, loving him, and living, suffering, dying, and rising again with him. It is only in this sense, that the flesh and blood of Christ, that is, his sacrifice which we appropriate in faith, can be efficacious in conferring eternal life, and possess a far higher worth than the Eucharist when it is coldly and outwardly partaken. Even here, accordingly, the idea of the flesh and and blood of Christ, in as far as it is the bread of life, is conceived in a general way, as the compendium of Christ's redeeming work, connected with the conception of his broken body and his shed blood. No less does the participation of this body and blood appear as a general act of the mind, an inward movement of faith and memory, of aspiration and love, towards Christ, of union with him, in order in and through him to live to

God. Of these leading thoughts the work de Eucharistia is but an exposition at greater length.

If after these introductory observations we form a general conception of Wessel's *doctrine of the Supper*, as stated in his several works, but principally in the treatise *de Sacramento Eucharistiae*, it is as follows:

He considers the life of Christ, with all his actions and sufferings till his death upon the cross, as the purest and most perfect manifestation of the love of God. *The Lord's Supper* is the means by which this love is presented to and appropriated by the individual; and consequently the participation of the Supper is a public acknowledgment of it, and a testimony of grateful love in return. "Let us acknowledge," says Wessel,[1] "that the Lord is good wherever he reveals his goodness at all. Let us acknowledge this more where the manifestation is stronger, and most of all where it beams with the highest lustre. But this it does in the cup which the Father hath given to the Son. If we take that cup in remembrance of him, because he has instituted in it a memorial of all his wondrous works, and if in doing so we discern his body, and that it is the body of the Lord, and how it was given, then it will certainly become to us a living and a life-giving bread, and kindle love in our hearts; and so his commandments will not be grievous." In another passage, after shewing how love is kindled by love, and how all that Christ taught, and did, and suffered, is but a means of exciting and nourishing it, he proceeds:[2] "The bread, however, which is set before us is the purest and highest mirror of love, exalted upon the hills, that all may see it, and none hide himself from its fostering ray. Hirelings have bread enough;[3] but who are they for whom the wages and the fruit of their labours is to love? He is fed with the true bread of God's word whoever can truly say, How sweet are thy

[1] De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 20, p. 457.

[2] De Orat. viii. 6, p. 148. With which compare de Sacrament. Eucharist. Cap. 26, p. 699.

[3] Mercenarii.

words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth![1] They are sweeter than honey and the honey-comb."[2] The Lord's Supper, however, is not merely the figure and pledge of the *love* of Christ, but it presents to us in general a *whole Christ*, all that he has suffered and done for us, all that he has been or will ever be. "In the Sacrament[3] he is given *to* us, as fully as in his passion he gave himself *for* us; so that the oblation, which he then made in our behalf, provided we grow in the continual remembrance of it, is of real benefit to us, and becomes not merely his, but ours; and ours, too, the righteousness and obedience of the offerer. In that case, we may go with boldness and confidence in our cause to the judgment-seat, because by that oblation we have been made more pleasing to God, than if we had never fallen; For as the Apostle infers, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, so may we likewise conclude, If Christ became obedient unto death for all, then have all been obedient unto death, and if they have been obedient, they are righteous. Accordingly, the body of the Lord was given for us, and his blood shed for the remission of sins and the deliverance of the oppressed,—given, to enemies, but given to them for their complete overthrow in every species of warfare with which they might be pleased to assail us. Hence it is called the body and the blood of the Lord, because it is not merely body and blood, but likewise toil, sickness, hatred, pain, sorrow, oppression, faintness, perplexity, weariness, desolation of mind in fact —all that was given for us and in the most perfect manner. . . . . And the more the body, with all the corporeal and organic powers, and all the inner parts, that is to say, the body and the blood, the spirit and the glory of the intellectual energies,[4] was given up and parted with for us, the more is this also offered to us. And in order that we may possess no mean pledge of the eternal gift, it is given to us in no imperfect or incomplete way, but in the Sacrament, as perfectly as in reality. In order, however, that you may feel how effectu-

[1] Psalm cxix. 103.
[2] Psalm xix. 10.
[3] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 21, p. 693.
[4] . . . . spiritus et spirituum claritas.

ally, consider with what love, facility, generosity, convenience, and sympathy it is done! What can be more affectionate than to be ever present?—What way more easy than to accomplish this with a word?—What act of generosity greater, than to give one's self?—What is more convenient than to do it with bread of flour,[1] and exhilarating wine?—What shews more sympathy than to succour the weak in all their necessities?"[2] The *totality of Christ* in the Sacrament of the Supper, the oblation and reception of his entire being in all respects,[3] is likewise expressed in another passage in a different way: "Wherever, therefore, the name of Christ is blessed and extolled, now and for evermore, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and however solitary and sequestered he who does it, there Christ is himself truly present, not merely by his divinity and goodness, but even bodily, by the whole beneficent efficacy of the power, skill, and fulness which are given to his flesh and blood. So that, in fact, to him by whom he is commemorated, it is a provision for all wants, an antidote to all poison, a balm for wounds, a laver for pollutions, a covering for nakedness, an ornament for deformity, a bread of life to the hungry, a wine of gladness and joy to him that is athirst."[4] And then in the sequel: "It is accordingly vouchsafed to the blessed name of Jesus, that whosoever celebrates his memorial, and wheresoever this is done, there he is himself bodily present in the celebrant,[5] as the celebrant also is in Him; so that when the Christian[6] is by the inner man in Christ, Christ is always and altogether, by the outward and inner man, bodily present in the Christian, by the power of his gifts of grace, the skill of his wisdom, and the fulness of his liberality." In this way, the body and blood of Christ are certainly given to the communicant in the Supper, but always at the same time, Christ in his totality, his work and

[1] . . . . . per panem similagineum.

[2] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 21, p. 693 and 694.

[3] . . . . . non sola deitate sua, sed et carne sua et sanguine et humanitate tota. De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 24, p. 697.

[4] De Sacramento Eucharist. Cap. 24, p. 697.

[5] . . . ut ipse corporaliter praesens in medio commemorantis sit.

[6] I here read instead of Christus, which gives no intelligible meaning, Christianus.

Spirit, for "it is not the flesh of Christ which justifies, nor the blood, but the work which is conveyed to us by the flesh and blood."[1] And for this reason the Lord's Supper, when efficacious at all, is efficacious for all the purposes for which Christ was sent to us. "For if all arts, all works of science, of counsel, of courage, of wisdom, faithfulness, and benevolence, have their root and seminary in meditation and remembrance, and if they are perfected, are cherished by meditation, and grow and advance by it to their perfection, who will deny that this holy and blessed memorial, instituted for all who fear the Lord, to keep in remembrance his wonderful works, is efficacious for every end for which God the Father has sent his Word? The end, however, for which he did send his Word, was that it might heal; He incarnated it for the life and the health of the world. And how can any one retain the Word sent except by remembering it? for unless it be remembered, it makes its escape. Remembrance, therefore, is, in its order, nearest to the origin of the Word; for the same wisdom was necessary to call forth remembrance which was required to beget the Word."[2]

From the foregoing observations it appears that Wessel does not conceive the *presence of Christ* as something *momentary* and confined to the participation of the Supper; but rather is convinced, that Christ will be *present always* to the soul which he loves.[3] Even if it be a peculiar strength and efficacy of his personal presence which is supposed, this can take place apart from the Supper as well as in it. "For who can doubt, that the Lord Jesus is often bodily present with believers in their dying agonies, though he does not for that purpose forsake his seat in the heavenly places at the right hand of the Father? Who can doubt that this may take place apart from the sacrament as well as in it? Who can doubt, that towards the individuals for whom he suffered, he cherishes not merely a human but a maternal love, nay, even the love of a woman in travail?"[4] It is self-evident

[1] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 8, p. 673.

[2] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 5, p. 667.

[3] De Magnitud. Pass. Cap. 70, p. 599: Et quo perpetuo gaudere liceat contubernio, excogitavit inaudito mysteriorum ingenio semper amatae suae praesens esse. . . . Commemoratio ejus est, quae eum delectat, quae illum trahit, quae illum praesentem facit.

[4] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 24, p. 697.

from this, that he puts no *essential* distinction between the presence of Christ in the Supper and that which, apart from it, may, by the lively elevation of the affections, always have place in believing souls. The difference consists merely in this, that the presence of Christ by meditation and faith, is wholly and exclusively an internal matter, whereas the presence in the sacrament is also obtained by a solemn action. Now here even Wessel makes the significant distinction between the *mental* or spiritual, and the *sacramental* eating of the body of Christ, and considers the former as the essential and necessary basis of the latter. "There is," he says,[1] "between the sacramental and the spiritual eating, this difference, that the former without the latter is unprofitable, nay even worketh death;[2] whereas the spiritual eating is always profitable and tendeth to life. Besides, the spiritual communion by pious aspirations is more profitable than the sacramental, at least in respect of that which is eaten and drunk. The latter (the sacramental), so far as laymen are concerned, only eats, unless in virtue of a holy peace, it be implemented by a blessed draught. It is also bound to time and place, allowed only to certain persons, and connected with a particular form. The other, or spiritual, springing from a pure heart and faith unfeigned, rejects no age, or sex, or race, and may be enjoyed at any time. The one is often injurious; the other is always salutary."[3] The spiritual eating and drinking of Christ is therefore the general and fundamental; the sacramental, on the contrary, is only a part belonging to the outward and visible manifestation. Accordingly, even in the sacramental participation, the inward is still the more important, and that with which the blessing is connected. "To feed on the body and blood of Christ in this way (by faith and love) is better than were we ten thousand times to receive the

[1] De Orat. viii. 6, p. 148 and 149.

[2] Wessel here refers to the saying of Christ, Luke xxii. 19, and of Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

[3] Compare with this the parallel passage Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 369: Sicut panis est, non tam exteriori quam interiori homini, sic non tam faucibus quam spiritu commemorandus manducatur. Corporalis palati adsumtio sine pia commemoratione non solum inutilis, quin et abominabilis est ad judicium: pia vero commemoratio semper efficax ad refectionem. Ab hujus mensae dignitate et ubertate non sexus, non aetas, non locus, non tempus, non professio, non conditio secludit.

sacrament at the altar from the hand of the priest, with insensible hearts and cold affections, though we might be in the state of grace."[1]

In virtue of this essential and inward communion, the *laity*, although outwardly excluded, participate in the *cup*. Wessel argues as follows: The Apostle Paul affirms that all our fathers did eat of the same spiritual meat. This they could not possibly do in a corporeal manner, because it did not as yet exist; but they ate of it inwardly. In the same way, however, even in the present day, all the laity drink the blood of the Lord; for if even our fathers drank the same spiritual drink, the laity will, with still greater certainty, do the same. Nay, were our eyes but truly opened, we would not merely feed on the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, but we would appropriate by cogitation all the works of God, and nourish ourselves with them, and thus in a certain way even feed upon iron, and sand, and rock.[2] This is the sense in which Wessel speaks of the spiritual bread and spiritual eating. The life that is thereby nourished is that of the inner man, but the inner man is essentially spirit.[3] No doubt the body and blood of the Lord are corporeal things; but if merely taken corporeally, they do not become a source of blessing but a cause of death. "The body and blood of the Lord Jesus," he says,[4] "however sacred, are still corporeal substances, and not spirit. Hence if they are taken only in a corporeal manner, they not merely do not spiritually invigorate the eater, but they cause his death; for he who eateth and drinketh unworthily is guilty of the slain body and the shed blood. . . . . The Lord says,

[1] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 29. p. 703 at the bottom.

[2] . . . sed in omnibus operibus Dei philosophantes pasceremur, ut et ferrum, et sabulum et saxa manducaremus. De Sacramento Eucharist. Cap. 29, p. 704. In nearly the same sense, Wessel also says, that we must feed upon the *name* of Christ: Dices igitur, numquid nomen panis? quis unquam nomina manducavit? Sed si attendes, quis in hoc discubitu conviva invitetur, quoniam interior homo solus, mens videlicet interna et voluntas, nihil mirabere, si nomina manducet, si nominibus reficiatur et confortetur. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 338. Here again, in the way we have frequently intimated, we are reminded of his Nominalism.

[3] De Orat. viii. 3, p. 143. In the same way, of the drinking of the blood, de Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 9, p. 676.

[4] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 8, p. 673 and 674.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. And this means, that however sacred the flesh may be, it has little to do in the case. . . . . It is not as if the flesh and the blood did not contribute to the justification of the communicant; for whosoever with faith unfeigned, and reliance on the Divine omnipotence, believes that under the species of bread and wine, and, as the consequence of God's high esteem,[1] condescending beneficence, and salutary operation, that holy flesh and holy blood are really present and contained, will doubtless experience in himself some stirrings of spiritual life, unless he believes and eats with a cold heart—eats, if it may be so called, but with no consideration, discernment, or inward digestion and taste—eats, but only in a corporeal and carnal, and not in a spiritual manner. Hence neither is he spiritually quickened, for such a faith as this can enliven no one in holiness and righteousness. It is the same faith as is found likewise in the authors of death; for even the devils believe and tremble. Whoever, therefore, eats and drinks the visible Sacrament only with his teeth and mouth, does not eat it at all, unless the inner man live to God;[2] because, If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. Hence who ever has not eternal life is proved not to have eaten of this bread. Whosoever, therefore, visibly eats, unless he likewise eats spiritually, does not properly eat at all." Accordingly the flesh, if conceived in a mere fleshly way, brings no salvation; but if understood spiritually, and in the spirit of love offered, received, contemplated, and enjoyed, it is life-giving and a fountain of salvation.[3] It can be so, however, only for him who already lives, and really longs for the nourishment,[4] and, consequently, the essential fruition of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, belongs only to him who feels the inward want and has the proper susceptibility for it.

Only by *faith*—this is a further necessary consequence of

[1] Dignatione, properly the estimation of God for man.

[2] Secundum Deum may also be translated, according to the Divine will; perhaps also, in a Divine way, meaning thereby, eternally.

[3] De Orat. viii. 6, p. 147, with which combine de Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 27, p. 700.

[4] Viventi ergo et esurienti panis manducando fit panis et nutrimentum. De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 7, p. 673.

Wessel's view—do we become partakers of Christ offering himself to us, and only the believer really feeds upon his flesh and blood. "We must give good heed to the word of the Lord, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you. They, however, have the true life who believe in him. And *therefore they who believe in him are they who eat his flesh.*"[1] And in another passage:[2] "He that believeth on me shall never thirst—therefore *to believe means to drink his blood.* I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger—therefore to come to him is to eat. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me—therefore every one who comes eats his flesh and drinks his blood. . . . Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die—therefore it is by faith that we feed upon him, and eat his flesh and drink his blood."[3] Accordingly it is only the believer who truly eats the flesh and blood of Christ. The believer, however, *must* also partake of this food. Partaking of it becomes a necessity for him, as it gives, nourishes, and heightens life. And no believer abstains from it. "Every Christian can at least, with holy affection, celebrate the memorial of the Lord. He who will not, has not life in himself, and he who piously wills, eats, by the very act, of the body of the Lord. This is inferred from the following indisputable deduction. No one who abstains from eating the flesh of the Son of Man has eternal life. Whoever believeth in him hath eternal life; consequently no one who believeth in him abstains from this food."[4] As Christ is the only way to salvation,[5] and as partaking of his flesh and blood, whether in or out of the Holy Supper, involves a vital acceptance of Christ; so is this participation also the source of salvation; and he who does not participate has not life in himself. "As there is no true way to perfect wisdom, glory, and love, except that which the Lord Jesus has revealed in the flesh, therefore, if we

[1] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 10, p. 678.

[2] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 27, p. 700.

[3] Ibid. p. 702, where it is also said in the immediately following proposition: Quia justus ex fide vivit, non ex pane, sed ex verbo procedente ex ore Dei.

[4] De Orat. viii. 3, p. 143.

[5] Comp. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 338, where Wessel specially appeals to the text Acts iv. 12.

do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man, we do not labour for the meat which doth not perish, and shall not have life within us."[1] The inward life alone is the proper and true life, and it is kindled and nourished by the spiritual fruition of the Saviour; to which there is even an innate propensity in man, for he is inclined spontaneously to reflect on a subject so great, novel, and excellent as the manifestation of Christ; and by so doing receives upon his mind the impressions which it is calculated to produce. Accordingly the inward fruition of Christ is indeed a necessity, though not one which is hard, and merely imposed from without, but one that corresponds to our nobler nature.[2]

The essence of the Supper, and the profitable participation of it, according to the foregoing remarks, depend no doubt upon the lively remembrance of the Saviour, and the renewed acceptance of all his benefits.[3] At the same time, however, Wessel exhibits it in the aspect of a *sacrifice*, as a renewal and repetition of the perfected sacrifice of Christ,[4] and adverts especially to the circumstance, that in the Supper, as in every other sacrifice, an eating is conjoined with the oblation.[5] A priest is required for the performance of a sacrifice; so the Supper, as a sacramental transaction, can be administered only by a *priest;* but in as far as that which is essential and really advantageous in it, is the inward and spiritual participation, it may, as an inward act, be celebrated even *without a priest*, and in total sequestration from men.

[1] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 28, p. 704. Connect with this Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 392: Quod si non commemoro Christum passum pro me, non habeo vitam in me: frustra igitur pro me passus est Christus. Ibid. Exempl. i. p. 338: Nisi enim commemoraverimus, penitus mortua est fides nostra. Quomodo credimus, cujus ne meminimus quidem? Sicut qui ignorat, ignorabitur: ita qui obliviscitur, oblivioni tradetur. Non tam exteriori homini necessitas panis incumbit, quanta interiori homini nostro inevitabiliter et irrefragabiliter lex medullitus imbibita, vivum hunc panem a Patre de coelo datum edendi.

[2] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 339.

[3] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 8, p. 675.

[4] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 47, p. 556. In omni commemoratione Jesu summum illud consummatae sanctitatis incensum offerimus.

[5] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 26, p. 699. In ritu sacrificiorum fere semper esus et refectio conjuncta cum oblatione. Et ideo Christianis summum sacrificium in esu. Et Dominus Jesus calicem bibit, quem obtulit in odorem suavitatis. Et congrue hoc in reparatione, quia per esum lapsi.

"I do not say," observes Wessel,[1] "that it is competent for any Christian man, and at any moment he pleases, to procure Christ's presence sacramentally by the Eucharist. This is competent only for priests; but I affirm that to him who commemorates his name,[2] the Lord Jesus is truly present, not only in his divinity, but in his flesh, blood, and entire humanity." By virtue of this inward participation, even they who for a long course of years were sequestered from the world, and saw no human being, far less a priest, partook all the while of the Holy Supper. They partook of it by remembrance, contemplation, the yearning of their heart, and the elevation of faith and love, by which they united themselves vitally with Christ. This was the case with Paul the Hermit,[3] Anthony, Macarius, Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, and other Anchorets, and holy women, whom Wessel highly reverenced.[4]

We have thus stated the leading thoughts of the two treatises with which we have been occupied in their reference to Zwingli. Let us again look back, and gather up the results.

Honius, setting out with John vi., regards the Holy Supper as essentially a pledge that Jesus Christ has given himself for our salvation. This, however, it is, only through faith and for faith. For solely by faith can we contemplate and feed upon Jesus Christ. Christ gives himself to us in the Holy Supper, not, indeed, in a sensible way, as if he were here or there, or as if the bread and wine were transmuted into his flesh and blood, but in such a way as that the bread remains bread, though at the same time *signifying* the body of Christ, whose oblation, vouchsafed

[1] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 24, p. 697.

[2] By the name, Wessel always understands the compendium of the thing itself, and a vital and efficacious knowledge of it. De Caus. Incarnat. Cap. 3, p. 417. And in like manner de Orat. i. 16, p. 28, and other passages.

[3] De Orat. viii. 3, p. 144. And in almost the same words, de Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 10, p. 678. Manducabat Paulus, primus Eremita, etiam temporibus illis, quibus mortalem nullum, ne dicam sacerdotem, communicantem videbat. Sed manducabat, quia credebat, et quod credebat, crebro commemorabat, etc.

[4] Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 369.

afresh in the Supper to every individual by means of faith as his own, is the ground of salvation.

Wessel designates the Sacrament, according to its chief design, as being the representation of the Divine love manifested in Christ,—the renewed fruition and public acknowledgment of it, the means of kindling and nourishing it,—the appropriation of Christ and his life, by faith and remembrance, whereby he is not only with us, but intimately in us. The Lord's Supper gives, as it were, Christ entire. The bread is his nutritive and Divine word. In the flesh and blood his whole work is tendered to us. This tender, however, is necessarily effected by means of lively remembrance, meditation, and reflection. It takes place at the first, and on every repetition, by faith. In this way the presence of Christ, is in its true basis, spiritual. The flesh profiteth nothing. This spiritual presence, however, is not restricted merely to particular moments, but extends over the whole life of the believer. By the accession of the service of the Supper, however, it acquires a sacramental character. Nevertheless, there is no essential difference between the spiritual and sacramental participation. And the latter has only worth and significancy in as far as it rests on the first as its basis. The Lord's Supper as a sacrament (sacrifice), can be performed only by a priest; as an internal act, or the appropriation of Christ by faith, it is, at all times and without the help of a priest, practicable and salutary.

All these, however, are likewise tenets of *Zwingli*, and it may be said that in the main they are all which he has brought forward. Now, inasmuch as he knew and valued the two treatises, the connection between them and his doctrine is certified, if anything ever was. From both of them, and referring in common with both to John vi., he borrowed the proposition respecting the fruition of Christ by faith with all its accompaniments,—from *Honius* in particular, the figurative interpretation of the words of the institution, and from Wessel the distinction between the spiritual and the sacramental eating of the body of Christ. The latter, no doubt, holds true only on the supposition that Zwingli was also acquainted with Wessel's greater treatise de Eucharistia. But, even if we suppose the contrary, he might have received from Wessel's Theses respecting the participation of the flesh and blood of Christ, the impulse which led him to

give to the doctrine of the Sacrament the shape he has done, and to advance it more boldly.

The final result would therefore be as follows: The essays and communications of the Dutchmen produced upon the mind of *Luther* a merely negative impression. They rather repelled him, and confirmed him in the literal and sensible conception which he had formed of the Lord's Supper in general, and of the words of the institution in particular, and which adhered more closely to that of the Catholic Church; although, as he was not yet labouring under polemical irritation, this did not prevent him from recognising and extolling in *Wessel* a true Christian, a learned theologian, and a man of congenial sentiments with himself. Upon *Carlstadt* the impression they produced was positive, though merely formal, in the way of inciting him to elaborate his peculiar theory, which diverges from the views both of the Dutchmen and Luther.[1] Upon *Zwingli*, however, they had a decided influence of a substantial and positive kind; so much so that he borrowed from them almost the whole of his doctrine, or at least was induced by them to conceive it more clearly and cast it into a more definite mould.

We pass to the second sacrament, with which Wessel was greatly occupied, namely to the doctrine,

(*b.*) *Of Penitence and Indulgences.*

The Catholic doctrine of *Penitence*, as it subsists at the present day, and was early developed by various of the Schoolmen, ascribes three parts to this sacrament, namely, contrition of heart, confession with the mouth, and satisfaction by works.[1] On these topics Wessel expatiates at great length.[2] In the first place, respecting *contrition*, he of course fully recognises the value of sorrow in connection with sin, but denies that outward grief and visible despondency are requisite for penitence, inasmuch as penitence like sin, is an essentially inward act, and an affair of the will.[3] In the way *Luther* subse-

[1] See vol. i. p. 225 sq.
[2] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 789 seqq.
[3] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 792: Est enim actus mentis poenitentia,

quently did, at the instance of *Staupitz*,[1] he assigns a value only to that sorrow which springs not merely from hatred to sin, but from love to God whom sin offends,[2] and, what is the main point, considers contrition as not at all an essential ingredient, but the effect and consequence of the sacrament. A contrite heart—to state his thoughts[3]—is one whose obduracy is to the utmost lessened and broken; to have a contrite heart means to offer to God a willing one. Contrition is consequently nothing more than obduracy diminished and reduced to obedience. Whosoever, therefore, in this way offers a pious and willing heart to God, is already justified, and needs to make no further satisfaction. Such a contrition, however, cannot belong to the sacrament of penitence; for a sacrament is a matter of grace, whereas contrition is a matter of righteousness.[4] Both by its nature and in the order of time, contrition, as a work of righteousness, and the fruit of justification, follows after the sacrament, unless God in some extraordinary way prevents it. "They derogate much from the spontaneous bounty of the giver, and heavily burden the shoulders of the sinner, who, *antecedently* to the sacrament of grace, require righteousness from the participant, for I designate contrition as righteousness. He who is contrite is already righteous, and is not quickened by the sacra-

sicut peccatum: utrumque enim voluntatis. Et sicut peccatum voluntatis tantum est, ita poenitentia solius est voluntatis.

[1] See supra p. 250.

[2] For, as Wessel says, de Sacram. Poenit. p. 793: "We are called to love, not to sorrow, (ad amandum vocati sumus, non ad amaricandum). Hence, when any one sorrows from love, he is acceptable to God, not for the sake of the sorrow, but of the love from which it springs." In the same sense he says, de Sacram. Poenit. p. 791: "In this doctrine it must be specially considered that neither pain, nor sorrow, nor contrition, is more acceptable in God's eyes, than the love from which they proceed. For of all passions of the mind love is the first (omnium enim passionum primus est amor). Judas grieved, and was so full of sorrow, that he went and hanged himself, but his distress was not accepted, because the source from which it flowed was love to himself and not to God. . . . As all fear, sadness, hope, and grief, have their root in love, it must be confessed that a penitential sorrow for sin is not more acceptable in God's sight than the love from which it springs."

[3] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 789 and 790.

[4] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 790.

ment, but is only thereby exonerated from the duty of confession in the face of the Church.[1]"

Wessel raises still stronger doubts against the second constituent of ecclesiastical penitence, namely, *confession with the mouth.* In the Catholic Church, the practice of confession is founded essentially upon the principle that the priest, as the representative of God and Christ, exercises a judicial office, and that the layman is bound to disclose to him the whole state of his soul, in order that a suitable penance may be allotted as the condition of absolution. Here Wessel denies, what is the foundation of the whole, namely, that the priest is a divinely commissioned *judge.* A *human being*, as he is and continues to be, has no control over the soul of another. He may, it is true, declare the word of God for the sinner's conversion, but he can no more convert him than he can break his connection with the vicious, and introduce him into the fellowship of the pious.[2] For the same reason, namely, because the matter in question is the soul's relation to God, the priest cannot sit in judgment upon the sinner. "He exercises a mere ministry," says Wessel,[3] "but the inward mystery (of really forgiving sin) is the work of God. How should it here be needful to exercise an outward and visible judgment upon sin, seeing that God exercises no such judgment inwardly? A thing is superfluously required in this sacrament which has no relation to the inward mystery. God judges only the party who confesses, and the confession which he makes, but by no means, the sins confessed; for how should he judge sins which have been already confessed, when he has promised to him who makes the confession, that, for the mere confession's sake, he will forgive all that is past. Accordingly they act a foolish part who, after the confession, not merely sit in judgment, but even after the absolution, do the work of the executioner, and scourge with lashes or smite with rods. God does not judge respecting fasts and haircloth garments; But man arrogates to himself such a judgment! God looks to the repentance and not to the sin; Man looks to the sin, and by his conduct resists God!" Wessel means not to deny the propriety

[1] In l. c. p. 790. [2] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 776.
[3] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 795.

and benefit of ecclesiastical confession, and just as little that it may form a part of the sacrament of penitence, but he disputes its judicial character "Sacramental confession," he maintains,[1] "is, as respects its forms, not judicial; so that if a sentence, and that a strict sentence of the confessor, be omitted, the act of the party making the confession, or that of him who administers the absolution, would not be a true sacrament. For it is sufficient for the truth of an efficacious sacrament that the penitent speak the truth, and that the confessor, after receiving the confession, pronounce absolution without stating a judicial opinion." In fine, he likewise denies that confession is absolutely necessary to obtain forgiveness. It is merely a guarantee of true repentance. But when this is in the heart, the sins are forgiven, before they are confessed. Whosoever confesses his sin has come to a sense of it, and whoever is sensible of it has already been awakened from death to a higher life. "To such a soul God is already present by his grace. In such a soul the God who is life, already dwells; for by his indwelling he has already quickened it. If, however, God dwell in it, it has become a temple of the Holy Ghost, enlightened and purged from the darkness of its sins. Inasmuch then as, even before confession, we are justified by grace and have become children of light, it is manifest, that by mere contrition of heart and without confession of the mouth, sin is forgiven."[2]

Even in the school in which Wessel was trained, among the *Brethren of the Common Lot*, we find a depreciation of ecclesiastical confession of sin. It does not among them, however, wear a polemical character, but consisted in their placing a different, and, as they imagined, a more important thing, namely, spontaneous *private* confession, at its side, in comparison with which the ecclesiastical act, as less fruitful and edifying, fell into the shade.[3] The attitude which the Brethren maintained, and which was rather one of indifference, had, in the case of Wessel, passed into hostility; whereas, on the other hand, we do not find in him their positive exaltation of private confession. Perhaps among the Bre-

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 795.
[2] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 777 and 778.
[3] See supra p. 94, 95.

thren themselves the primitive custom had fallen into disuse, or if it still subsisted, was less practised by Wessel, inasmuch as in general, he laid little stress upon oral confession if there was real repentance in the heart.

Finally, Wessel likewise states his objections to the third part of ecclesiastical penitence, namely, *satisfaction by works*. He says[1] "that they who affirm that the satisfaction connected with the Sacrament of confession forms an essential part of penitence, speak very irrationally.[2] In the first place, they do not recognise the full efficacy of the Sacrament, inasmuch as they deny that the pardon of the (celestial) King suffices for forgiveness. In the second place, they falsify the words of the absolution, and after saying, I absolve, yet bind the penitent and dismiss him unabsolved. But what is worst of all, they likewise subject the whole Sacrament to danger, because they protract it (*i.e.* postpone its proper efficacy) until the penance enjoined has been fully paid. Accordingly, if in the meanwhile, and before the Sacrament is perfected, the penitent from frailty commit another lapse, he interposes an obstacle in one part, and thereby nullifies the whole, of the Sacrament. For things which constitute an essential unity are by the nullity of one rendered all null." Wessel chiefly insists upon the principle that the pardon of sin by God, which is vouchsafed to the truly penitent, necessarily includes impunity, and that thereby all grounds for particular penances are done away.[3] Past sins cannot be imputed in any other way than for punishment. If, however, they are imputed, they are not forgiven. When, then, the Psalmist praises[4] as blessed the man to whom the Lord doth not impute iniquity, it follows that pardon necessarily includes impunity, and that they commit an act of injustice who impose, or even reserve till after death,[5] parti-

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 796.

[2] ". . . quia detractant sacramentali sufficientiae.

[3] In this sense, Wessel says Epist. de Indulgent. Cap. 3. p. 882: Non tollitur privatio nisi constitutione habitus; lex non multat nisi praevaricationem. Praevaricatione igitur cessante cessabit et multa. Post ergo culpam perfecte dimissam, nullus restat reatus. Reatus enim culpam, seu praevaricationem habet pro causa totali. Convertibiliter igitur cum ea statuitur ac destituitur.

[4] Ps. xxxii. 1 and 2.

[5] De Sacram. Pœnit. p. 796 and 797.

cular punishments on one who has been already pardoned. It could not but repugn Wessel's deep evangelical sentiment, that oppressive works of penance should be imposed upon a true and contrite penitent in place of the cheering announcement of grace. Against this he appeals especially to the example of the prodigal son. Him the father received at once. "He did not blame, or upbraid, beat, or put him into prison, but ran to meet, kissed, and embraced him, wept for joy, clothed him with a robe, ordered shoes to be put upon his feet, and a ring, as a mark of dignity, upon his finger, slew the fatted calf, prepared a feast, and called upon all to eat and drink and be merry. What papal indulgences were necessary to this returning penitent? Full return to God, therefore, is the only worthy fruit of penitence, and conversion of itself is satisfaction."[1]

On a conjunct view of all, it appears that Wessel by no means rejects the sacrament of penitence understood as inward sorrow and outward confession of sin. He rather calls earnestly for both, and especially for sorrow the most profound;[2] but he contests the traditionary dictates of the Catholic Church, respecting the three parts of penitence, to wit: In the first place, that contrition or conversion of the heart can be a constituent of the sacrament, inasmuch as it is but the fruit and consequence of the justifying grace received in it; Secondly, that confession is a judicial transaction, and a condition of the pardon of sin, inasmuch as it can be considered only as an expression of true repentance, to which forgiveness of sin already pertains; And, thirdly, that personal satisfactions are required to implement the sacrament and secure forgiveness; inasmuch as in this way the pardon of sin by God would be limited, and the efficacy of the sacrament made dependent on future and, therefore, uncertain, acts on the part of men.

With the doctrine of penitence the Catholic system connects in the closest manner that of *Indulgence*, and with both of these, that

[1] Ibid. p. 796.

[2] He makes a strict distinction between the Contritio vulgaris, languida, infirma, tenera, delicata, refuga pati pro nomine Jesu, and true repentance, which he characterises as parata ad faciendum omne bonum et parata ad patiendum omne malum. Epist. de Indul. Cap. 14, p.910.

of Purgatory. We have already fully demonstrated the connection between indulgences and penitence,[1] and referring to what we have said in our account of John of Wesel's warfare against indulgences, we pass at once to that which was waged in a similar spirit by his friend Wessel,[2] and which, although it is manifestly of independent origin, yet forms a desirable complement to the other.

In consequence of the principles laid down by Wessel on the subject of penitence, as well as in connection with his peculiar views of Purgatory, he could not but combat the Catholic doctrine of indulgences. He denied the necessity of personal satisfactions as a complement to penitence, and considered the forgivenes of sins by God as of itself perfect and sufficient. With the ecclesiastical worth of satisfactions, however, that of indulgence likewise falls. In like manner, he denied that Purgatory has essentially a penal character, considered it as a transitionary stage of purification, necessary for all souls, and from which there can and will be no issue for any, except in consequence of the completion of their purification, and never by means of the interposition of the Church. By this, the two main pillars on which the traffic with indulgences rested were pulled down. Wessel, however, likewise assailed it directly. The substance of his convictions on the subject he enunciates in different ways, partly dispersed in treatises upon other subjects, partly in several lists of propositions, and partly also in a short work upon the subject. This work,[3] the contents of which we will forthwith succinctly state, appears in the form of a letter to his friend Jacob Hoeck, Dean of Naeldwick, with whom Wessel carried on a large theological intercourse,[4] and, in particular, conferred on the subject of indulgences, of which, as an ecclesiastical institute, Hoeck undertook the advocacy. Wessel expresses his opinions to his friend with great openness. He does not scruple to call indulgences a pious fraud;[5] nay,

[1] See vol. i. p. 235 sq.

[2] Comp. here the Treatise of Kist: De Pauselijke Aflaat-Handel in Nederland—in Kist und Royaard's kirchenhist. Archiv s. 148—244, and in particular respecting Wessel s. 194—200.

[3] Its title is, Epistola Vener. M. Wesseli Groningensis responsoria ad M. Jac. Hoeck, Decanum Naeldwicensem, de Indulgentiis. It consists of 14 chapters, and is to be found in *Wess.* Opp. p. 876—912.

[4] See supra in the Biography, p. 360—364.

[5] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. i. p. 876.

with still more warmth of feeling, an error and a lie.[1] In stating his principles, he partly adheres, it is true, to former teachers, and chiefly to *Gerson*, for whom he had so high a respect. But, in general, he reasons independently, from Scripture, history, and the nature of the case. That indulgences are not mentioned in Scripture, had been conceded by Hoeck, who, at the same time however, appealed to the fact that, according to the testimony of John, Jesus had done many things which are not written in the Gospels, and maintained that they were founded upon ecclesiastical tradition. In reference to this, Wessel protests, that he does not reject indulgences on the mere negative ground that Scripture does not mention them. He recognises the worth of tradition, and admits the progressive character of Christian doctrine in the Church,[3] but he denies that in the primitive times of Christianity any such institute existed. In the case of a true tradition, he is of opinion that a connection must be demonstrated. The earlier teachers, however, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory, have said nothing about indulgences, because the abuse had not been introduced in their days.[4] On the contrary, we find that it came properly into vogue, so late as under Boniface VIII., with the appointment of the year of jubilee,[5] and even that, from that date, there is no concord among teachers upon the subject;[6] but, on the contrary, such a mass of contradictory opinions that scarcely two acknowledge the same principles. How can there then be here any true tradition, when there is no connection with the apostolical age, but a blank of 1300 years, and no unity, but an indigested chaos of opinions? "Such a confused credulity,"

[1] Ibid. Cap. 7, p. 889. This is also done by John of Wesel. See vol. i. p. 274, and in still stronger expressions by Luther in his theses, *e. g.*, Thes. 52: To expect to be saved by letters of indulgence is a nullity and a falsehood. Thes. 24: Therefore the great majority of the laity must be deceived, and so on. Thes. 32: They shall go to the devil with their teachers, who imagine themselves sure of salvation by letters of indulgence.

[2] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 3—5, p. 880—884, and Cap. 9, p. 893—896.

[3] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 7, p. 888 and 889.

[4] In l. c. Cap. 6, p. 886.

[5] Ibid. Cap. 7, p. 889. Compare for the historical facts vol. i. p. 255 and 256.

[6] Ibid. Cap. 5, p. 884.

says Wessel,[1] "has no truly Catholic character, but rather causes dispeace and division, and dissolves all into the subjective views of individuals." Besides these, he uses other arguments, guarding himself, however, against the suspicion of building his opinion merely upon rational grounds, and not upon faith.[2] He draws his reasons not so much from general abstractions as from the connection of Christian thought. "Ever since my boyhood," he says, at the very outset of the treatise,[3] "it has appeared to me a ridiculous and indecent thing to suppose that any man can cause a good equal to four in the eyes of God to become a good equal to eight, by the mere addition and intervention of a human verdict. Within the pale of Christianity, however, it is an essential doctrine that the forgiveness of sins comes only from God, and through the mediation of Christ. God forgives past sins, preserves us from present, and protects us from impending ones, and the Lamb takes away the guilt and punishment of the present and the future.[4] To remit or to retain sins pertains originally *(principaliter)* to God only, but to the Church communicatively *(participative)* by the Holy Spirit.[5] The plenary power of forgiveness, or the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Christ has committed, not to *one* person but to a *unity*.[6] Priests and the Pope, therefore, are here nothing but ministers of Christ and the Church. They do not act on their own independent authority, but are merely stewards of the sacrament, and can give to every one only as much as the nature of the rite[7] and the recipient's inward connection with God bring along with them."

These are the principal thoughts of the little work. To one or two particulars we shall revert in the sequel, but before doing so, wish here to direct attention to *Wessel's Theses on Indulgence*,

[1] Ibid. Cap. 3, p. 881: Nihil igitur unum et inconfusum traditur. Confusa vero credulitas non est catholica, sed seditiosa magis: quia singula singulorum.

[2] . . . quasi ego rationem, non fidem attulerim. Cap. 2, p. 880.

[3] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 1, p. 876.

[4] Ibid. Cap. 10, p. 898.

[5] Ibid. p. 898 and 899.

[6] Christus . . . non uni sed unitati donavit. Cap. 8, p. 891.

[7] Ibid. Cap. 10, p. 897.

which must suggest to every reader a parallel with *Luther's*. In their main tendency they perfectly agree with the Reformer's celebrated Ninety-five; while some of the particular expressions remind us also of his language, although certainly not in consequence of any historical connection. Evidently, however, Wessel, as we found to be also the case with John of Wesel,[1] went farther than Luther at his first entrance upon the reformatory stage, when he shewed so remarkable a mixture of boldness with modesty and even bashfulness. Luther, as is known, combats only the abuse of indulgence, he endeavours to bring it back to its original destination, which was the remission of ecclesiastical penances, and vindicates for all bishops and preachers the right of granting it; Wessel, on the contrary, strenuously assails indulgence itself, together with the doctrines of personal satisfactions and purgatory, as the foundation of the practice. For the sake of their singularity, I shall cite verbally the most important of his Theses,[2] and append in the annotations such of Luther's as they inevitably recall to our minds.

Wessel proposes generally to consider with care the true design, proper cause, and actual effect of indulgences, and says, Thesis 3: There is a great difference between the minister of sacraments and the dispenser of graces. The first acts according to his obligation, and knows not what good he does; the second according to his discretion, and gives to whom he will. 4: The effects of the sacraments are determined by the participant's frame of mind. The Pope cannot, according to his good pleasure, apportion to the person who worthily comes to baptism or the supper the measure of grace of which he shall be partaker.[3] 5: Baptism and peni-

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 274, 275.

[2] We find in Wessel two small collections of theses on the subject of Indulgence, de Sacram. Poenit. p. 803—806, and ibid., p. 806—808. We give the most important from the first of them.

[3] That the benefits of the sacrament, and, in general, grace and the forgivenness of sin, come solely from God and not from the Pope, Luther avers in several of his 95 theses, especially in the 36th: Every Christian who feels true grief and sorrow for his sins, has full remission from pain and guilt, and this belongs to him even without an indulgence. In 37: Every true Christian, whether living or dead, partakes of all the blessings of Christ and the Church, by the gift of God, and without an indulgence.

tence are two sacraments by which the child of wrath and darkness can become the child of God, and return from death to life. By their very nature, therefore, they do not call for an outward sentence, and the other external things which are connected with them, as a place, a sponsor, holy water, and a minister are with Baptism—and admission, the reserve of certain cases, and the salutary injunction to repent, are with Confession. All these are *ecclesiastical* matters,[1] and not *divine*, usefully invented by the wisdom of the governors of the Church, and not to be omitted save in a case of necessity. 10: On him who is returning, or who has returned, to God, nothing ought to be so strictly enjoined as to sin no more, but purely to love God.[2] Purity of heart, therefore, is the only perfect penitence, and ought to be inculcated in the way of instruction and admonition. 12: In matters which are purely of Divine right, the Pope may teach, remind, and exhort, but cannot command *(mandare)*. He who hears the command of love is by the accession of the Pope's mandate, placed under no stronger obligation than he was by his mere admonitions and exhortations; because the command of God was of itself sufficiently binding, and no additional obligation necessary. If, therefore, the Pope cannot, by his mandates, bind believers with a higher obligation than that of the Divine law (*Divini fori*), it follows, that he can enjoin nothing at his own discretion save what is commanded by God.[3] 13: Believers are servants of God by the service of worship, but not the servants of the Pope, either by reverence or worship, for the law of Christ is a law of perfect freedom. 14: We must not overlook the saying of the Apostle, 'These things speak with all authority,' but the words are to be explained, Speak with the authority of the Divine command, not of thine own. 15: The Church minister merely dispenses the sacraments, but leaves their efficacy and

[1] Luther's Thesis 32: Christians ought to be taught that the purchasing of indulgence is a voluntary matter, and not commanded.

[2] Luther's Thes. 43: Christians should be taught that he who gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, does a better work than buying indulgence. 44: For, by the work of love, love increases, and man becomes more pious; but by indulgence he becomes not better, but only more secure, and more free from pain or punishment.

[3] Luther's Thes. 6: The Pope can forgive no sin except in so far as to pronounce and affirm what God has forgiven.

fruit to Him who searches the heart. 16: Plenary pardon of sin is the actual removal of every obstacle preventing the beatific vision;[1] just as thorough repentance consists in true and sincere purity of heart. Both, however, come from God alone. 17: The most perfect penance which can be imposed is, Sin no more.[2] To this the minister of the Church has it in his power to admonish, but he cannot command or confer it; and, therefore, he ought not imperatively to impose any other inferior penance. 20—23: Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. . . . . No mortal man can judge the superstructure even though it be his own work;[3] and if so, it is clear that as little can any mortal substitute, at his pleasure, one worker for another, so that he who has built wood shall, according to the sentence of the Pope, have built gold; or that that fire shall not try the hay and the stubble otherwise than it tries the silver and the gold. 26: If the Pope could arbitrarily judge and determine the worth of pious works, the foundation of the piety of the ancient Fathers would be subverted, who believed that we ought to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives; for in that case they would rather have to serve the Pope. 27: If the Pope could judge arbitrarily, he would not be Christ's vicar, but Christ would be his;[4] for the sentence of Christ would depend on his will.

[1] Luther's Thes. 23: If the remission of all penalties can be given to any, it certainly can be given only to the most perfect, and they are very few.

[2] Even in the Sermon on Indulgences, which was prior to the composition of the Theses, Luther says, that God of his free grace pardons sins gratuitously, "requiring nothing more than a good life thenceforward." Of the Theses, the 1st may be here compared: As our God and Master, Jesus Christ says, Repent, his will is that the whole life of his believing people on earth shall be a constant and unceasing repentance; and the 4th: Grief and sorrow on this account, which are true repentance, last as long as one is displeased with himself, namely, until his exit from the present into eternal life.

[3] Luther's Thes. 30: No man is certain that he has sufficient penitence and sorrow, and much less can he be certain that he has received perfect forgiveness of sins.

[4] Luther's Thes. 20: Therefore, the Pope means only that penalty which he has himself imposed.

With these, several other Theses[1] from a subsequent Catalogue are to be connected. Here the 13th says: The people think one thing of indulgences,[2] and the Popes another. The Pope gives plenary remission from a penance he has imposed. The people understand by it an unobstructed transition to blessedness.[3] 15: No one can grant a plenary pardon of sins who cannot also grant a plenary indulgence. 16: No one can grant a plenary indulgence who cannot also grant its requisites, namely, penitence, contrition, grace, charity, and purity of heart.[4] 19: The Church could be branded with no greater scandal than were the bishops empowered of their own authority to issue commands. This would be more formidable to kings and princes than Christ at his birth was to Herod and the Romans. 21: If the Pope cannot issue his mandates in matters purely of divine right, as for example about loving God, as little can he order, that his canons shall be observed on pain of mortal sin. Hence the canons are directions and counsels of the wise.[5] 22: The Pope cannot cause that a meritorious work shall be of greater value in his estimation than it would be in that of God; for otherwise he would not be the vicar of Christ, but Christ would be his vicar.

Besides the points hitherto discussed, Wessel illustrates still more fully other aspects of the subject. The Church of Rome, as we have seen,[6] built its theory of indulgence on special foundations. Such were the tenets of a Treasure of good works, a pretended apostolical institution, and the presumed plenary power of the Pope, to whose dispensation the Treasure of the Church was intrusted. Of all these supports Wessel, like John of Wesel, seeks to deprive the Romish doctrines. Just as *Luther*[7]

[1] They are also to be found de Sacram. Poenit. p. 806—808.

[2] Luther's Thes. 24: Hence the great majority of people must be deceived by the splendid promise made without distinction, and fancied by the common man to mean payment of a penalty. Comp. Thes. 41.

[3] Luther's Thes. 27: They preach a mockery who pretend, that as soon as the penny clinks into the box, the soul escapes from Purgatory.

[4] See the 23d Thes. of Luther, already quoted.

[5] Luther's Thes. 26: The Pope acts properly in that he does not by the power of the keys which do not belong to him, but by help or intercession vouchsafe pardon to souls.

[6] See Vol. i., p. 237 sq.

[7] In his 62d Thesis.

designates the Holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God, the true treasure of the Church, so does he make *the Church's treasure* to consist in *love*,[1] and then infers:[2] It is the estimation of the heart which makes anything a real treasure. A treasure is that to which the heart is attached. To him, to whose heart the treasure of the Church is not of itself a treasure, it never can be made one by the Pope. Whosoever, therefore, truly desires to partake of the treasure of the Church, and be enriched by it, can do so only by *love*, and by a love constantly growing. Every other way is vain. This was the way which, in the Thebaid and Scythian desert, Anthony and Paul trod. They had never even dreamt of the plenary power of the Roman Bishop, and yet, I venture to think, that, freed by a full pardon from all sin, they departed from this life to God, and could not have died a more blessed death, even if the Roman Bishop had mercifully granted them his plenary indulgence. Every one, therefore, must draw for himself from the treasure of the Church. The Pope cannot do it for him. "From the treasure of the Church," says Wessel,[3] "no Pope or General council can enrich any one, either in part or whole, save him whose heart they renew and warm with affection and so cause the true treasure of the Church to become truly a treasure to him. If they cannot kindle in his heart the desire for this treasure, as little can they secure to him its possession. The Pope may wish, pray, implore, trust, commend, thank, and perhaps, also, sometimes obtain something by his prayers;[4] but that

[1] For the rest, both to Luther and Wessel, the idea of the treasure of the Church is not very strictly defined, but rather of a general kind and capable of application in various ways. A treasure is that which is of highest worth and ought to be most highly valued in Christianity. In this way, Wessel calls love the treasure of the Church; but he gives the same name also to God himself, the Father, Son, and Spirit, and especially to Christ as the Redeemer of the human race, because it is by appreciating and appropriating this treasure that believers are moulded into the image of God, and that Christ is formed within them. Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 11, p. 901. *Luther* first sets up the Gospel as the true treasure of the Church, Thes. 62. But he also says, Thes. 56: The treasures of the Church are not sufficiently named and known; and indicates, especially Thes. 59, their poor members as the treasures of the Churches.

[2] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 810 and 811.

[3] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 810.

[4] Compare Luther's Thes. 26.

he can either authoritatively bestow or rightfully command, I do not believe. . . For he who cannot worthily prepare for glory can as little perfect in it. As both of these things, refer to God only, so do they also proceed from him alone." Add to this, that even did there exist a treasure of merit in the Romish sense, still the Pope could not transfer sums of merit from it to this sinner or that; for merit, like guilt, is a thing which cleaves only to persons, and cannot by its very nature be transferred. "All merits of every sort," observes Wessel,[1] "are personal. They have no independent existence,[2] and are founded in grace and not in law." With special reference to the fact that the granting of indulgences, as usually practised by the Church, rested upon the supposition that the good works and merits of the clergy and monks might be transferred to others, Wessel suggests the reflection, how improbable it is that parties who cannot certainly determine but must leave to God the success of their prayers, should yet be qualified to share with others their merits and rewards. He is of opinion that they would act more prudently were they to admit as few applicants as possible, lest the fund should haply prove insufficient for both these and themselves.[3] He likewise reckons that it would be a very serious circumstance in the situation of pious monks, if the head of their monastery possessed an arbitrary power of transferring the merits of one to another of the brethren. The thing, however, is intrinsically impracticable, because the head of a monastery is neither master, nor judge, nor depositary, nor distributor of either its collective or individual merits.[4]

Wessel further denies, as we have already seen, that indulgences are an *apostolical institution, and a genuine ecclesiastical tradition.* He maintains[5] that the use of them was introduced or sanctioned neither by the Gospel nor yet by the practice of the Apostles. It was not until the appointment of the Jubilee,

[1] De Commun. Sanctor. p. 815, Propos. 4.

[2] . . . personalia sunt, non realia. To the same effect John of Wesel. See Vol. i. p. 261.

[3] De Commun. Sanctor. p. 814.

[4] De Commun. Sanctor. p. 815, Propos. 2, 3.

[5] Epist. de Indulgent. Cap. vii. p. 889.

under Boniface VIII.,[1] in 1300, that it came into vogue. How then could it happen, that an apostolical tradition, if it were apostolical to the extent of pertaining to the rule of faith, had slumbered for thirteen centuries? The Apostles received from Christ the power of the keys and authority to bind and to loose; but that is something very different from ecclesiastical indulgences. Peter and the rest of the Apostles possessed authority to bind and to loose, in virtue of their office as ministers, not in virtue of any lordly power pertaining to them. They were authorised to dispense the Gospel, the mysteries of grace, and the doctrines of salvation. And whoever embraced these was freed from the bonds of Satan. But Peter was vested with no arbitrary power to deliver from, or fetter with, these bonds, whomsoever he pleased. As there is but one who baptises with the Holy Spirit, so there is also but one who, of his own plenary power, binds and looses. But what power can the Pope have to loose, when he does not even know, whether the party whom he looses is really delivered from the bonds of Satan or not? For how can he judge on a subject of which he has no knowledge?[2] Wessel does not deny,

[1] It is notorious, that after the practice of indulgence had crept in by a series of gradual and progressive abuses, the crusades became one of the chief occasions of ripening it. The introduction of the year of jubilee, however, also formed an era. See Vol. i. p. 255. On this account, Wessel severely blames Boniface VIII., and cites the well known saying respecting him: Intravit ut vulpes, regnavit ut leo, defunctus ut canis. He also inveighs against other Popes for patronising the traffic, for instance against Sixtus IV. Epist. ad Engelbert. Leid. de Purgat. p. 869.

[2] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 771. We find the same thing expressed by Wessel, Epist. ad Engelbertum Leidens. p. 868. In another passage, de Sacramento Poenit. p. 772, he asks, What then was conferred upon Peter by the word of the Lord? And he answers, Two things. In the first place, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, by which the good are admitted, and the wicked excluded. These keys, however, are given in a similar, if not the same way, to all the children of God. In the second place, the duty of the pastoral office, by the faithful discharge of which a double honour is acquired. This pastoral office, however, relates solely to the society of the baptised. Out of it, or in reference to things which pertain to the immediate relation of man to God, the Pope has received no commission from Christ, but only in regard to matters which, in the outward commerce of Christian society, may be known to the prelates.—As he further ob-

that they whose sins the Apostles forgave, really received forgiveness; but he considers it was not a direct but an indirect forgiveness. To sinners, who embraced the truths of the Gospel and obeyed the admonitions of the Apostles, the Apostles forgave their sins, not by any power of their own, but as fellow-workers with God.[1] In this sense Wessel likewise explains the saying of Christ to Peter: Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, &c. It refers only to the ministry of faith and piety, on the part of the Apostle, which must be met by a corresponding disposition on the part of men. What in this way he binds and looses, is valid in heaven; but whatever he may attempt to bind or loose in any other way, is null.[2]

We learn from this also the *power of the Pope and the Prelates with reference to indulgences and excommunication.* The Pope can do no more in reconciling souls with God, than in alienating them from Him. All, however, which he can do in either way, is outwardly to excommunicate[3] them by his sentence, or to release them from ecclesiastical rules and penalties by his indulgences. The only mean of reconciling with God or alienating from Him, is the simple use or abuse of faith, love, and hope. Whoever is reconciled to God by grace and love is not more reconciled to him by the approbation of the Pope; nor is any one estranged farther from God, by the Pope's excommunication, than he is in his heart. It can never be lawful for the Pope to make any one a worse sinner than he is.[4] A faithful and wise servant acts according to the mind of his master, and what he then does, his master also approves. In this manner, whatsoever a faithful and wise servant of God praises and sanctions, or blames and abhors, the verdict is likewise ratified in heaven. Nor is it the dignity of his office

serves, p. 773: The Pope has only as much power as he draws from his resemblance to Peter. In as far as in his actions he is moved by the Holy Spirit in wisdom and love, in so far and no farther does he possess the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

[1] Epist. ad Engelbert. Leid. p. 868.

[2] . . . . nihil est, quod facit. Epist. de Indulgentiis. p. 892.

[3] . . . . foris ad oculum separare, *e.g.*, from decent burial.

[4] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 773 and 774.

which authorises him to do this, but the love which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in his heart. The validity of his sentences springs not from his authority, but from their conformity to the loosing and binding justice of God. In proportion to his agreement with that justice, is his share of its authority. In binding and loosing, the sentence of men does not precede, but follow that of God. And this Christ intimates when he says, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained. As if he had said more clearly, Whosesoever sins ye retain or remit by the Holy Spirit which ye now receive, such sins are undoubtedly retained or remitted.[1] . . . . For this, however, the authority of a bishop is not necessary. The ardent love of a faithful and discreet believer is equally effectual;[2] nay, her sex would be no disqualification to a woman. A faithful and wise maid in whose heart the love of God is shed abroad, can also think and decide conformably to the Divine sentence.[3] On the contrary, the sentence of a man who is not filled with the Holy Ghost, and consequently with true love and wisdom, even though he be the Pope, is of no weight. "The carnal man knows not the things that pertain to holy love, and therefore cannot judge of them. The same is the case with the judgment of the Church and its rulers. As they are often fleshly, sensual, worldly, and devilish, and yet discharge their office like spiritual and godly men, it is clear that excommunications and indulgences do not extend to what are matters of favour and love, but merely to the outward peace and tranquillity of the Church. Hence indulgences are only remissions of the penalties which a Prelate has imposed or can impose. While excommunications are segregations from bodily fellowship and outward communion. Because from the

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 774.

[2] Here Wessel reminds us of the principles of the Brethren of the Common Lot, who endeavoured to occupy the laity as much as possible with religious affairs, and among whom it was a part of mutual confession to sooth each other's minds in reference to their sins. See supra p. 94 and 95.

[3] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 774 and 775.

spiritual fellowship of those who fear and love God, no one can exclude but God himself."[1]

We have yet to add, The measure of the pardon of sin is determined by that of love; and consequently only he can effect forgiveness of sins who can heighten love and advance it to completion.[2] As he alone removes poverty who enriches the subject of it, and he blindness who gives sight to the blind, so only he forgives many sins who makes the sinner to love much; but this is a thing which neither the Apostolic chair, nor a Council, nor the Catholic Church, can do by indulgences.[3] In like manner, love is the measure of participation in the fellowship of the saints, and consequently, to this the Pope can promote no one by his own authority. He can only do it, as the Apostles did, by faithful service in the Gospel.[4] Peter, the first of the Popes, has pointed out the one true way of entrance into the kingdom of heaven, in the Ten stages of weanedness from the world, diligence in a godly life, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.[5] In these words the Holy Spirit seems, by the mouth of Peter himself, to have prophetically rejected indulgences. This bull, not of St Peter, but of the Holy Ghost, though published by Peter and received as canonical by the Church, is the only undoubted one which grants a genuine and plenary indulgence.[6]

Besides love, the genuine evidences of the forgiveness of sin are to be found in contrition of heart and amendment of life. Contrition, when it is perfect, requires no Papal bulls; and if it be not perfect, can never be made so by the Pope. The Papal indulgence needs this to make it plenary. This, however, if plenary,

[1] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 781 and 782. To the same effect *John of Wesel*, see Vol. i. p. 295.

[2] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 14, p. 909: Peccata nemo dimittit, nisi contrarias virtutes efficaciter infundat, sicut nemo caecitatis incommoda tollit, nisi qui visum et visus perfectionem donat.

[3] De Sacram. Poenit. p. 798 and 799.

[4] De Commun. Sanctor. p. 811.

[5] 2 Peter i. 4—8.

[6] De Commun. Sanctor. p. 811 and 812. With this agree, Epist. de Indulgent. Cap. 6, p. 885 and 886, where Wessel says at the conclusion: Aliquid igitur invenitur in Scripturis de plenariis Indulgentiis, licet non secundum usitatum hodie morem in populo.

does not need the Papal indulgence.[1] The best of all evidences, however, of the forgiveness of sin, is to do good and not to be overcome of evil. This evidence is far surer than any bull whatever though sealed in due form, and though we even suppose it written by the Pope's own hand, and with a perfect conviction of the plenitude of his power.[2] For both statements, Wessel appeals to the authority of Gerson, who had taught that the Pope can remit no other penalties than such as he has power to impose, and that only the High Priest Christ (excluding therefore the Romish priest), with the Father and the Holy Ghost, can grant perfect remission of sins.[3]

The principles of Wessel on the subject of indulgences are intimately connected with his views on Purgatory, the last important point in which he shows his reformatory way of thinking, and which forthwith claims our attention.

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3. OF THE STATE AFTER DEATH, ESPECIALLY PURGATORY.

Almost all that Wessel has written on the subject of the Last things, relates to the doctrine of *Purgatory*. To this his reformatory tendency supplied the motive. Even here, however, his controversy essentially rested, and had entirely grown up, on a positive ground. Not only was he penetrated with the most confident faith of an *eternal life*, but he formed a very exalted conception of the state of perfect *blessedness*. The life on earth appeared to him but as a night of death in contrast with the glorious day of eternity. "For," he says,[4] "how shall the Lord resuscitate us to life, unless this present life of faith be but as a kind of death, when compared with the life to come? The light of a lamp is a sort of light, but compared with the morning star at its rise, it is darkness, and so also is the light of the morning star as darkness to the dawning day, and the dawning day as darkness to the sun at noon; but the last day

[1] Epist. de Indulgent. Cap. 4, p. 884.
[2] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 4, p. 883.
[3] Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 3, p. 881.
[4] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 28, p. 703.

(the highest perfection in bliss) will be a day of perfect light, and when we awaken to it, we shall rise from the dead."[1] But the very idea of the highest *perfection* in an eternal life, produced in the mind of Wessel the conviction of the necessity of a *middle state*, through which, at his exit from this imperfect existence, every one must pass. In all things there is a natural evolution, a constant progress. The dawn must precede the day; the plant must grow from the bud; and so too the soul advances from one stage of light to another, and the germ of faith, which now lies like a mustard-seed in the heart, can only develop all its fulness and attain to all its magnitude, by degrees.[2] This suggests the notion of a State of progression and purification intermediate between earthly imperfection and celestial consummation; and this, according to Wessel's view, is *Purgatory*.

His thoughts upon the subject are substantially as follows. He distinguishes between purgatorial and penal fire. The former, which is intended for those who fall asleep in the Lord, but are not yet perfectly free from fault or qualified for participating in the highest felicity, is not properly a penal state, but rather a lower stage of blessedness, similar to the condition of our first parents in paradise; nay, in many respects superior to it. Paradise may hence also be designated as purgatory. In it there is no need of positive external penalties or material fire. But the purifying fire is essentially of an inward and spiritual kind. By this, Wessel understands God

[1] Comp. a similar passage in the Biography, p. 377. Annot. 2.

[2] These thoughts are beautifully developed in the Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 13, p. 906, where, among other things, it is said: Hanc seriem ducatus animarum a lumine lucernae praesentis exsilii, quo pusilla sapientia fidei nostrae sicut granum sinapis est, et velut parvum centrum, quod crescere oportet in illam coelestis globi immensitatem, universum processum et felix animarum incrementum usque ad orientem solem, purgationem puto. . . . Semper uti tunc (in paradiso) ita nunc oportebit purgari per lumen surgentis aurorae et adspirantis diei, donec perfecta lucentes Dei sapientia et perfecta charitate Dei ardentes, digni Deo videndo judicentur.

[3] Wessel has several special writings upon Purgatory. His different meditations, theses, and letters upon the subject, are to be found collected under the title *de Purgatorio* in the Groeningen edition of his works, p. 826—863.

himself, Christ, and the Gospel, in so far as these exercise a cleansing and sanctifying influence upon man, and in particular sorrow at being by his own fault excluded from supreme felicity, and the vision of God, and an affectionate yearning after Him. Ardent love to God and Christ burns the man not yet deemed worthy of full fellowship with them. The more, however, that the glow of this love penetrates his heart, the more does it purify him, the more is the love itself heightened and the yearning diminished, and the more is the inward anguish, the spiritual fire, extinguished, until he is perfected in love and then translated to the highest felicity, the beatific vision of God.

These thoughts must be severally developed. Wessel proposes to mould his whole doctrine on *Purgatory according to the Scriptures*, and to these only, formally protests against all that contradicts them, and promises to recant, the moment he has been convinced of having made any deflection from them, so that he cannot at least fall into any damnable error.[1] The text on which he mainly rests is 1 Cor. iii. 11—13, where the Apostle says, Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. . . . The fire shall try every man's work whether it is built upon this foundation or not. From this he deduces the following *notion*:[2] "The fire of Purgatory is that which rather purges, than punishes, the stains of the inner man, that accompany us even after our departure from the body,—it is that fire, I say, which consumes defilement, or, in other words, sins, because the inner man can have no other stains than these. These stains of the spiritual life are, according to the Apostle, tried by the fire, when it separates, and, with fiery zeal, consumes the wood, hay, and stubble, until at length upon the one true and only sure foundation, which is Jesus Christ, nothing is built but silver and gold and precious stones; so that then the whole building, fitly joined together, is reared into a holy temple to the Lord. Accordingly, we must grow up into a holy temple, by that same sacred fire which purges us from bad morals and wrong affections. This is not so much the opinion of Augustine,[3] whose words I use,

[1] De Purgatorio p. 830.
[2] De Purgat. p. 829.
[3] De Civit. Dei xxi. 26.

as it is of the Apostle Paul;[1] and it confirms me in my conviction, so that even were an angel from heaven to announce to us a different doctrine from that which we have received, it would be wrong to believe him. For, I am persuaded, the statements of the Fathers are to be taken figuratively rather than properly, when they seem to teach what differs. It is manifest, however, that almost all the terms used by the Apostle, when he speaks of wood, hay, stubble, a foundation and a building upon it, are figurative. He applies only two explanatory of the metaphor, namely, *Christ* and *shall try*. These two terms lead us to refer the whole metaphor of material objects to the spiritual understanding of the inner man. It is, therefore, not real wood, hay, stubble, which are here spoken of, and so forth; but Christ is the foundation, and the image of Christ (in man or the human race), without spot or wrinkle, is the structure built upon it; And unless the zeal of ardent love burn away every spot and wrinkle of lukewarmness, never does the structure which has been begun, grow up into a temple worthy to be the habitation of God. From these remarks, you will easily gather my view, and be able to compare it with the popular opinion, and the gossip of the fickle and credulous vulgar."[2]

Wessel's conception of Purgatory rests upon a conviction of the moral development of man even after death, and of *different stages of blessedness* which correspond with his progressive moral states. This conviction, for which he endeavours to borrow support from *Nominalism*,[3] he expresses in various ways,

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 11—13.

[2] *Luther* also, who at a very early period rejected the doctrine of Purgatory, will not hear of a proof of it from the text 1 Cor. iii. 12, sq. which Eck had proposed. He gives the passage, however, a different meaning from that of *Wessel*, referring it not to inward purification, but to the last judgment. See Luther's letter to Spalatin, dated 7th Nov. 1519, where it is said, Th. 1. s. 366, Verba Pauli clara sunt, quod dies Domini opera cujusque probabit. "Qui dies, inquit, in igne revelabitur." Unde vel insanus videt, quod verba Pauli loquuntur de *die extremi judicii*, in quo mundus ardore solvetur, et non nisi vi aut figura (quae nihil probat) ad *purgatorium* trahi possunt. And at the end: Hoc est certum, neminem esse haereticum, qui non credit esse purgatorium, nec est articulus fidei, cum Graeci illud non credentes nunquam sint habiti ob hoc pro haereticis, nisi apud novissimos haereticantissimos haereticantes.

[3] De Indulgent. Cap. xiii. p. 907: Facilius haec, vener. Magister

and, among others, as follows:[1] "There are degrees in the blessedness of those who see God. Why, then, should there not also be degrees in holiness? and who knows what that of consummate holiness may be?" Purgatory itself constitutes a lower stage of blessedness. The blessedness of it consists negatively in this, that here souls have been "discharged from the prison of captivity, delivered from the body of death, divested of the flesh of sin, and rescued from the wants of frailty and the snares of the tempter;"[2] positively in this, that the departed hear the law of the Divine will more perfectly and readily, and are gifted with a higher ability to falfil it. "The dead," he says,[3] "advance in clearness of faith, confidence of hope, and ardour of love, being emancipated from the frail body, in order that they may run more swiftly the race set before them, and with longer steps hasten to perfection. This, and even more glorious things, Paul intends us to believe of the departed, when he says,[4] 'I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not.' It is as if he said, Did you but know what their condition is, you would not sorrow. It is, such a condition that, if we knew it, we should rejoice. It follows, that they are not in misery, not under the rod of the tormentor,[5] or in the fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. On the contrary, they are under the discipline of a father who instructs them, and rejoices to see their daily progress, while they, with all their rapid advances, burning hopes, and thirsting desires, are indignant at themselves for not burning with a keener glow." The purgatorial fire, as a state of incipient beatitude, is therefore essentially distinct from the penal fire of misery. "The fire which shall try every man's work, will not be so much penal, because then it would not be probationary. It cannot, therefore, be a material fire of which Paul speaks; for this would not be

intelligunt, quibus non ignota sententia *Nominalium*, de gradus ad gradum intensione etc.

[1] De Purgat. p. 849.

[2] De Purgat. p. 837, where a particular chapter treats de *felici* statu animarum in purgatorio.

[3] De Purgat. p. 833.

[4] 1 Thessal. iv. 13.

[5] . . . sub virga lictoris.

able to separate, approve, or reject, the inward differences of minds and wills."[1] And still more distinctly in the following, passage:[2] "I greatly wonder at the inattention common to the doctors of our (Nominalistic) school, who have not been induced, by the authority of the teachers of the primitive church, to draw a distinction between purgatorial and penal fire. *Gregory of Nazianzen* calls that a purgatorial fire which Jesus Christ sent on the earth, and of which he wished that it were already kindled.[3] It must, however, have been of a spiritual kind, because it was designed to purge away the spiritual spots of imperfect wisdom, imperfect notions of God, and imperfect righteousness. And Paul intends the same thing when he says that the fire *shall try*; for if it tries, it must also understand, of what sort every man's work is. But he designates as penal the fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

Even here Wessel declares, as in other passages he does still more distinctly, that *Purgatory* is merely *an inward* and *spiritual fire*. No doubt material fire and bodily pain may have a purifying efficacy, but this is only accidental.[4] The real purgatorial fire must be essentially and intrinsically purifying, and hence, as the purifying is of a moral character, must necessarily be a spiritual power. In the treatise on Indulgences,[5] he writes to Hoeck as follows: "You say of those who depart this life in real contrition, that, furnished with the Papal indulgence, they take instant flight to heaven. I am surprised that so learned a man as you should not have thought of that terrible spiritual fire of which *Augustine*[6] speaks, and which, by a spiritual probation, will try every man's work and consume the wood, hay,

[1] De Purgat. p. 834.

[2] De Indulgent. Cap. xiii. p. 908, and consonantly to it de Purgat. p. 850.

[3] Comp. Ullmann's *Gregor.* von *Nazianz.* p. 505.

[4] De Purgat. p. 833: Item de purgatorio dicit M. Wesselus, sensibiles poenas non esse per se purgatorias, quemadmodum caecitatem, si decem millia collyriorum adhibeas, nihil purgat, nisi reditus visus: ita sordes animae discedentis nihil per se, nisi crescens amor Dei purgat.— And de Purgat. p. 835: Unde hic vere purgans ignis est per se, licet ignis materialis per accidens purgatorius esse possit.

[5] De Indulgent. Cap. xiii. p. 904.

[6] Sermo 112. de Civit. Dei Lib. xxi. Cap. 26.

and stubble, or, in other words, every perverse affection. Manifestly, and as all confess, the foundation of which St Paul speaks is a spiritual one; and accordingly, that which is built upon it, silver, gold, &c., cannot be corporeal but must be spiritual too. If then these seven things are spiritual, what frenzy possesses the minds of those who dream that the fire, which is the eighth, and which is to try the works of the inner man, is something corporeal!" If we here take into account what Wessel understands true purifying to be, namely, growth in love, in the imperfection of which impurity consists,[1] resemblance to God and union with him by love,[2] we shall discover that his further statements respecting the true nature of purgatory are quite natural. In fact, *purgatory* is, in his eyes, first *God himself*, and next *Christ* and the *Gospel*, in as far as these have a purifying action upon man. "What, then, is that fire?" he asks,[3] "if it be not the consuming fire, which that God is said to be who burns and consumes the reins and purifies all gold, . . . the God who searches the heart and the reins. The purifying fire is consequently identical with the foundation which is laid, and if our indulgence-mongers *(Indulgentiarii nostri)* would but sufficiently consider what the fire is and what the things to be burnt are, they would not so rashly promise a perfect forgiveness of sin and exemption from punishment after death; for they would know that the trial by that fire is neces-

[1] Comp. *Luther's* Thes. 17: It seems as if, in proportion as the pain and terror of the soul in purgatory cease, their love must grow and augment.

[2] De Purgat. p. 836: Unde adsimilari Deo, et per amorem uniri, purgari dico: et impurum voco, non perfecte amare. In amorem crescere, id vere purgari est. Here, also, Wessel distinguishes purgation from punishment, and says, that if the two were identical it would follow that the devil would be the most highly purified, because he is the most severely punished. For the rest, Wessel makes hell to consist in inward punishment and self-torment, more than anything external and positive. At Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 351, he speaks of the inward conflict, and impotent struggles of the demons, and then says: Non jam externus eos inimicus oppugnat; *sed ipsi se ipsos urunt*, et quem possunt miseri suae calamitatis incusare auctorem? Ipsum superbum illorum odium rectissimo illorum judicio ignis est. *Ipsi se ipsos* volentes excruciant. *Origen* conceives the matter in the same way, and *Byron* puts into the mouth of Lucifer the words,

. . . . the o'er-peopled hell
Of which thy bosom is the germ.

[3] De Purgat. p. 835.

sary, as just judgment is after inevitable death." Even in this passage Christ is indicated as the foundation which is laid; and still more emphatically does Wessel describe him as a purifying power, when he asks,[1] "By whom shall we be purified, unless by him who is the lover and teacher of love, and the first pattern of fraternal affection?" Conformably to this, he also characterises the gospel of Christ as the only true and effectual purifying fire.[2] But above all, he considers purgatory to consist in love of God and Christ, which, in consequence of being still separated from perfect fellowship with its object, is accompanied with a real bitterness;[3] but which, at the same time, penetrates the soul with its glow, has a purifying influence upon it, and constantly increasing, renders it at last worthy of union with God and Christ; by which means the purgatory within the soul consumes and abolishes itself. These thoughts are expressed in the following passages: "The more the penitent loves, the more is his expectation (of perfect fellowship with God), a punishment for him, and one to which he does not require to be condemned, as it comes naturally, and for that reason can be taken away by neither Pope nor Prelate. And if such penalties as the fear of God, longing for Him, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, &c., are highly effectual for purification, what need is there for any other, seeing that without these all others would be useless?"[4] Again, "Love is purified by nothing but its own increase; and hence, whatever pain it may suffer, unless it increase,[5] it is not purified. Our blessed and holy Master, Jesus Christ, endured a thousand agonies and yet was not purified by them (as he did not need to be); Lucifer will suffer eternal tortures, and will be purified just as little. The purifiying efficacy of

[1] De Purgat. p. 862.

[2] De Purgat. p. 846. Thes. 33: Quod Christi Evangelium est solum, verum, praecipuum purgatorium.

[3] De Purgat. p. 849. Thes. 35: Hunc flagrantis animae ardorem et amaritudinem ego puto verum, postremum, et perfectissimum purgatorium. Again, p. 859: Primo quidem (sponsa Dei) purganda per ardentem et exurentem ignem charitatis, etc.

[4] De Purgat. p. 833.

[5] The Gröningen edition has here, it is true, argumentum charitatis The reading, however, of the older edition of the Farrago rer. theolog. to wit, augmentum, is, both on account of the meaning and of the augeatur which follows, to be preferred. For the rest, the passage is to be found in De Purgat. p. 838.

pain accordingly is only accidental. And the only thing which intrinsically purifies is growing love to God and Christ." In fine, Wessel designates as a double fire, the circumstance that the penitent, whose purification is yet imperfect, knows himself to be excluded, as unworthy, from fellowship with God, but at the same time feels an unsatisfied longing after it; and, therefore, he says,[1] "This double fire I call in truth the purgatory of the inner man. It purifies the heart until with a pure heart he sees God. It is a fire which inflicts a sorer pain than all corporeal fire and all corporeal death, and does so all the more, the keener the yearnings of desire from which it proceeds."

Although purgatory consist principally in this cleansing pain of yearning and of love, which, as connected with a sense of guilt, bears relatively the character of punishment, still it is properly not a penal state, but the *first stage of blessedness*, including deliverance from terrestrial sorrows and restraints. It is the commencement of paradise. Nor has he here merely the subjective nature of departed spirits in his eye, but reminding us of *Dante*, in whose poem Paradise occupies at least the summit of the hill of Purgatory, he assigns to Purgatory its *place* in *Paradise*. The grounds for this he founds partly in a comparison between our first parents and the sinner who is undergoing a process of amendment, but at the moment of death is not yet wholly sanctified, and partly and chiefly in the words of Christ to the penitent malefactor, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' To the question, What is the most suitable locality for the purifying of love? or, in other words, Where is purgatory situated? he answers:[2]—"Not in heaven, into which nothing that is unworthy, weak, or vain, can enter,—Not in the prison of the captives (hell), for liberty is necessary for the nourishment and growth of love. The fittest place is rather Paradise, that place at first allotted to original righteousness (*justitia originalis*), and then promised to the malefactor who, having died a blessed death, and being thereby confirmed for ever, could not relapse into evil, and was already purer than Adam and Eve, as they were not yet established in affection to the brethren or in love to God; for it is through a purified affection to the brethren that the way to

[1] De Purgat. p. 840.

[2] Epist. de Purgat. p. 862—863.

the love of God passes.[1] This view Wessel also expounds several times in short theses,[1] of which I shall sum up the substance: "What is said of man's being made in the image and likeness of God, applies solely to the inner man. In like manner, this image is also in the angels, for both have the same vocation. The image or similitude of God is perfected only by perfect union, it is by adhering to his divine original, that man becomes one of spirit with him. To this object, however, there is a different way for man and for angels, and a different strength also to walk in it. Our first parents in paradise were still far from that inward fellowship with God in which the angels stand, and it behoved them gradually to approximate to it. For this purpose, the first of the commandments, that of love, was written in their hearts. In the state of original righteousness, however, there was still much imperfection, and consequently much to be purified. The place for their purification was Paradise. The posterity of our first parents who die a holy death, are confirmed in grace and consequently holier and purer than Adam and Eve in the state of original righteousness. Mary Magdalene stood nearer to similitude with God and the possibility of a union with Him, than Adam and Eve in Eden. For her, and all whose souls are like hers, the purifying place and state cannot be inferior to paradise, of which they are more worthy than were our first parents. Even to the thief on the cross, paradise was assigned as a purgatory. The state of purgatory lasts until love is perfect and the heart pure; then only are spirits capable of seeing God. In particular, *Christ*, the master of divine wisdom and love, exercises a purifying influence over them, but *Angels* also may produce the same effect. The *Greeks* believe that all departed souls pass to the blessedness and purity of the holy Angels without any intermediate cleansing; the *Latins* maintain that souls which have died a holy death must first undergo a careful purification, and that that as yet involves no intrinsic blessedness. Respecting the nature of the purification, however, the members of the Western Church entertain very conflicting opinions, some supposing that it is a sensuous pain, others believing, with Augustine, that the fire of cleansing discipline is of a spiritual kind.

[1] De Purgat. p. 830—833. Again, p. 845—848. In fine, p. 860.

The saying of St Paul, The fire shall try every man's work, is in favour of the latter opinion, for here the fire is manifestly a spiritual power.

From these observations, two inferences may conclusively be drawn, and are expressly enunciated by Wessel: First, that *all* who depart this life need purgatory; Secondly, that no ecclesiastical authority, but only an adequate degree of *sanctification*, can deliver from it. If perfect love and purity of heart are the sole qualifications for the vision of God, and consequently for supreme felicity, and if a certain degree of imperfection and sinfulness cleaves to every human being,[1] all must pass through an intermediate state of purification. "I believe," says Wessel,[2] "that none of the sons of God will enter either into the priesthood, or the kingdom, or the eternal nuptials, unless he ascend, purified and cleansed, through these steps (of an ever-heightening love and holiness). Such alone can dwell in the eternal fire (he means the height of bliss and the fulness of the Divine love), because they shall be perfected and enkindled by that true, pure, and holy purgatory. And they who burn with this ardour need no outward purgatorial fire, because they are cleansed by the middle degrees before they reach the highest. But they did need to be so cleansed; because so long as their love was not perfect, they were excommunicated from the highest service of the temple, and the throne, and the bridal chamber." It is a kindred truth that only *perfection in holiness and love*, not however any authority of *Priests* or of the *Pope*, can deliver from purgatory, and for the following reasons, which are also developed in a series of theses: Man is only in so far exempt from punishment as he is cleansed from sin; He is cleansed from sin in so far as Christ is formed within him; He attains to fellowship with God in so far as he loves. Over all this, however, no Priest[3] or Pope has any

[1] De Purgat. p. 841: Quid sibi vult purgatorium nomen, nisi purgationem? Purgatio quasi ad purum actio. Depuratio autem, impuri abjectio, emundatio. Habet ergo omnis purgandus impurum aliquid et immundum, quod etiam in justis manet post hanc vitam.

[2] De Sacram. Eucharist. Cap. 10, p. 679.

[3] Over the inner man, to guide him from death to life, and renew in him the image of God, no priest has authority. The priest ought to serve him, but has no right over him. The purification, renewal, and

control. He can exempt from punishment as little as he can pardon sin. By no arbitrary power can he perfectly form Christ in the hearts of babes and minors, or abolish the mighty gulf between the defective and the perfect lover.[1] If our share of supreme felicity depends on the measure of our love, it can be determined by him alone, by whom alone love can be inspired. He who cannot know the unseen things that take place in a man's heart, ought not to pronounce judgment upon him.[2] He who cannot declare a man to be free from sin, can as little pronounce him to be free from punishment. The sorest affliction to a loving soul is the deferring of its holy wishes, and this the Pope neither can, nor ought, if he could, to do away;[3] for affectionate longing, connected with a sense of unworthiness, belongs to a thorough moral development, and is the natural preparation for the enjoyment of supreme felicity. "Even then were Peter or Paul himself to propose to abolish this fire by indulgences, the attempt would be improper. It would do away all the beauty of that progress to supreme felicity, so precious and delightful to behold, and even the enjoyment of it by him by whom it was attained. For, as I believe, the draughts from that most pure and limpid fountain will be sweetest when they are benignly vouchsafed to him whose thirst has been allowed to grow keen. Whereas were they offered to the careless and the slothful, they would be offered in vain so long as there are defects in his purity and imperfection in his love."[4]

This brings our exposition of Wessel's opinions to that limit where faith is converted into vision. It still remains to take a survey of the practical aspect of his piety.

conversion of man, till Christ is formed in him, proceed from God alone. De Purgat. p. 839.

[1] This is the main subject of the Theses de Purgat. p. 827.

[2] Ibid. p. 826, 15th Thesis.

[3] Comp. the Theses p. 828 and 829.

[4] De Purgat. p. 840.

SUPPLEMENT.

WESSEL'S ASCETICS.

Wessel was the pupil of an ascetical school. He was trained among the *Brethren of the Common Lot*, no doubt, with independence of mind, but yet under the discipline of many and various exercises, and had received his first deep impressions of piety from *Thomas à Kempis*. Nor did he subsequently repudiate this connection. For although his tendency was predominantly scientific, still his science rests essentially upon the principle of love and of that fellowship with God of which love is the bond and is continually directed to the interests of practical religion. It thus acquires an ascetical element, and its asceticism is partly mixed up with his scientific works, and partly forms the theme of special treatises, of which one, like the Imitation of Christ, is even a book of devotion properly so called.

The writings of Wessel, which belong to this class, are his treatise on Prayer, De Oratione libri xi[1], his *Scala Meditationis* in four books,[2] and his three *Exempla Scalæ Meditationis*.[3] The *Book on Prayer* contains his principles on that duty, especially its moral effects, detailed meditations upon the Lord's Prayer and its several petitions and words, with various other theological observations on the Name and Being of God, on the Divine attributes, on the Father, Son, and Spirit, on Christ and His Kingdom,

[1] Gröningen edition, p. 1—185.
[2] p. 194—326.
[3] p. 327—408.

on the condition of the human soul and its cleansing by the various appliances of the scheme of redemption. The Scala Meditationis states more distinctly Wessel's real ascetical principles, his views of the method and way of conducting spiritual meditation, fixing the thoughts, directing them to the highest and worthiest objects, and thereby strengthening, ennobling, and purifying the mind. He here also treats of the active and the contemplative life, of the difference between them and of the worth of each, as well as of the various means of training the mind by scientific exercises, such, for example, as mathematical and logical reasoning, the study of rhetoric, &c., and at the same time succinctly developes the principles of these exercises. The Scala Meditationis was dedicated to his acquaintances, the *Brethren upon Mount St Agnes*, near Zwoll. For their particular use, he also wrote the Exempla Scalae Meditationis, which contains an application of the maxims delivered in the previous work, pious meditations upon the most important subjects of Christianity, and directions for self-knowledge and the appropriation of the Christian salvation, and is consequently an Ascetical work, properly so called, like the treatises of *Thomas à Kempis*. The Brethren on Mount St Agnes no doubt already possessed such *Scalae Meditationis*,[1] composed, wholly or partially, in metre, and, as it appears, also arranged for singing.[2] But they had supplicated of Wessel, whose spirit they reverenced, to write for them new devotional meditations, which might be better calculated, than the psalms they had hitherto used, for fixing their wandering thoughts and directing them to the highest objects.[3] Wessel

[1] Wessel says Exempl. i. p. 327: Nondum videram Scalas vestras. Non tanta exercitiorum vestrorum sanctorum incrementa speraveram.

[2] It is there said in an after passage: Quis antehac audivit, ut in psalmodiis universa illa sententiarum varietas ad numerum redacta, digitorum articulis adnotata, velut vocum notulis, per singula psallentem teneat attentum? Id apud vos conceptum ac partum, educatum, consummatum est.

[3] Verum quia psalmi plerumque ex alio in aliud considerandum transmittant, postulat sancta et insatiabilis aviditas vestra scalam velut instrumentum aliquod, quo possit fluxa mentis instabilitas unicuilibet rei desideratae fixius immorari. Ibid. p. 327 and 328.

gratified their wish, and having regard to, and perhaps also partially founding upon, the *Scalae Meditationis* which had hitherto been used upon Mount St Agnes, gave to these a new form and arrangement.[1] The contemplations are divided into short, and rarely somewhat longer sections[2] or *gradus scalae*, which have particular titles, *e. g.*, Quaestio, Responsio, Excussio, Electio, Commemoratio, Attentio, Consideratio, Tractatio, Confessio, Optio, Querela, Oratio, etc. The whole is introduced by a very modest preface, in which the author laments his inability to keep the promise which he had rashly made, but zealously extols the utility of silent composure and meditation, as having in it a something which is Divine and cannot be learned or compensated for by mere scholastic exercises.[3]

The *principles* which Wessel delivers in these various works may be summed up as follows: Man must, above all things, attend to his thoughts, and frequently ask himself, What is it that I am now thinking of? Even this will awaken him to reflection, and make him sensible of his infirmity and helplessness.[4] He will become aware of a prodigious fluctuating, wandering, and wild chasing of his thoughts, so that were he to express them aloud, he would appear to be insane.[5] It is not, however, their perplexing and distressing instability alone, but no less their base and unworthy direction for which he has to blame himself. There is in them, so much vanity and foolishness that they make his life itself vain and nugatory; "for, as a man thinks, and speaks, and

[1] Vestrae igitur scalae, quarum ego nunc non parum exempla sequor, et castigato numero et colligato ordine certos gradus, neque infructuosos complectuntur. p. 328. The diction is in Wessel pure prose without rhythm. In how far one passage Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 332, refers to singing, is not clear to myself.

[2] *Wessel* himself, for instance, says 349: Quoniam hic scalaris gradus longiusculus fuit. The usual length is a whole or a half quarto page, and even above or below it. A longer Gradus extends to about three pages.

[3] p. 327, 328. On the latter page, it is said among other things: Verum hoc pacto cor in sanctis rebus meditandis figere ac stabilire, non scholastica traditione, sed munere tantum divino de sursum conceditur.

[4] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 328, 329.

[5] . . . ut si canerem sicut cogito, ex altero in alterum jactatus palam delirus aut phreneticus judicarer. Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 381.

wills, such he also is."[1] Not merely in ordinary life, but also "while at prayer," says Wessel,[2] "the thoughts of our soul are sometimes unstable, sometimes vain, sometimes mutilated, and sometimes weak. They are unstable, when they are not aimed at a particular mark, but, in our negligence and sloth, rule our souls without a purpose, chasing each other, like a ship whose pilot is drunk and which is driven by every wind. In most of us, nay, almost all, there is this instability of mind, by means of which we fluctuate in our cogitations, as if tossed by the sea-waves; and although nature, the cause of so many things, fosters and nourishes the tumult, like the storm upon the ocean, still it has another mother, namely carelessness and forgetfulness of God, our Lord and Father."

Here Wessel points to the foundation of the malady under which man labours in his inward life. But when the cause of a distemper is known, it is easy to prescribe the appropriate remedies. Whoever loves spiritual life must necessarily take arms against this fluctuating state and discover its basis.[3] The main cause of the inward wavering, wandering, feebleness, and wrong direction of our thoughts, is the want of a vigorous love to God,[4] and consequently its chief remedy, the awakening of such a love. Where the treasure is, there also is the heart. If our treasure be in God, our love will be with Him, and with our love our thoughts. "Our love is that heart which the Wise man tells us to keep with all diligence. Our thoughts show our love. Where there is no love the thoughts will wander, and where the thoughts wander, there there is evidently no love. . . . And as it is in consequence of want of love that the thoughts waver, so it is in consequence of perverse love that they are perverse."[5] The main thing, accordingly, is that there shall be a pure and vigorous love to God. Who

[1] Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 330.

[2] De Orat. i. 2, p. 7.

[3] De Orat. i. 2, p. 7.

[4] "Whoever in such circumstances tries himself," says Wessel, "inveniet frigidam sui in Deum affectionem. Omnis enim, cujus ita fluctibus jactatur et raptatur mens, ut indifferenter huc illucque vagetur, profecto vagus et affectione neuter est, nusquam ardens. Nihil igitur pluris Deum facit quam cetera, quando non magis Deo cogitatus haeret quam ceteris." De Orat. i. 2, p. 6.

[5] De Orat. i. 2, p. 8.

ever has such a love in his heart, finds it difficult not to think of God,[1] and consequently his thoughts have always a steady and exalted aim. All else depends on this. A vigorous love to God gives to the exercises of piety their importance, worth, and settled tendency. This is especially the case with the two principal means of cultivating elevation of mind, namely, contemplation and prayer. Wessel, as we have already seen, ascribes a high value to the calm contemplation of Divine things, and prefers it even to active life, only, however, on the supposition that it emanates from a deeper love and devotedness to its object.[2] In like manner the worth of prayer, in his eyes, depends on its being the outpouring of a truly loving heart, or love conversing with God.

In particular, on the subject of *prayer*, Wessel expresses himself as follows. He defines it as the opening of the heart, the communication of the wishes to God,[3] not for the purpose of instructing him respecting them, but for our own sakes, that we may more frequently turn to him, feel and confess our necessities, increase in the experience of his grace, and thus become perfected in love. Prayer must always proceed from a soul which is apprehended and moved by its object. He who merely utters the words of prayer, uses his voice, it may be, but does not pray;[4] even though he adhere to the rules prescribed by the Church, still as his soul is empty, what he does is not prayer. In prayer more depends upon the warmth of the affections, and the approximation of the soul to God, than on great and sublime thoughts.[5] It must be the expression of desire and yearning, and must have life, because it is addressed to the living God, who is spiritually present. "To speak in God's presence means to live and hold fellowship with him; in such circumstances no one dares to lie or deceive. To speak in God's presence signifies to adore him. When we pray, we do not need to utter words aloud, unless it be to fix and settle our

[1] De Orat. i. 4, p. 12.

[2] Scal. Medit. i. 1, p. 194—198.

[3] Est oratio explicatio mentis in Deum. Sane oratio est optionis ad Deum insinuatio etc. De Orat. i. 1, p. 3.

[4] . . . sonat quidem, sed non orat.

[5] Is perfectius orat, qui intimiori affectu se Deo conjunxerit, non qui plura legerit, aut sublimiora meditatus fuerit. De Orat. iii. 3, p. 47.

thoughts, or to excite those who may be present to do the same. The set form of words, given by our great Master to suppliants, was intended more as a rule for their thoughts and affections, than for the language they were to use."[1] Inward prayer without vocal words, Wessel characterises as more pure, concentrated, truthful, and spiritual, and consequently in every respect better than prayer of other kinds.[2] In order, however, to obviate misconception, he says,[3] "I do not reject vocal prayer in itself, but I condemn the multitude of such prayers, and the haste with which they are said: as this is a hindrance to attention and lively desire. The more, however, a vocal prayer is accompanied with attention, and animated with ardent longing, the more I approve of it; at the same time, I prefer, and more highly recommend, inward prayer, as coming nearer to its object." In the same sense, he gave to an unrestrained elevation of the heart the preference to the perusal of books, even of the Holy Scriptures.[4] Of course he likewise approved of reading, in as far as it tends to enliven and exalt the religious affections. That, however, was always the essential object; and in no other view could he explain the precept, to pray without ceasing; for it can refer merely to the drift and frame of the heart proper for a suppliant,[5] and not to prayer in words. He likewise makes the success of prayer dependent on its spirit; for only that prayer is effectual which is offered in the name of God or Christ. No one, however, can pray in the name of God and Christ, unless he have vital faith in them, and sanctify their names in his heart.[6] Now, inasmuch as Wessel understands by their name not a mere external thing, a verbal sound, but always the compendium of their being and such an acquaintance with it as awakens pious emotion, prayer in the name of God or Christ always with him signifies prayer combined with an intelligent and heart-affecting knowledge of Christ, and bears within it

[1] De Orat. i. 6, p. 13.
[2] See ibid.
[3] De Orat. i. 8, p. 17.
[4] Quanto praestantius judicium et efficax desiderium, supra sterile monimentum, tanto judiciorum et affectionum exercitium, *extra libros etiam sacros*, nobilius lectione. Ibid. p. 16.
[5] De Orat. i. 18, p. 31.
[6] De Orat. i. 16, p. 28.

the principle of its power and efficacy. To pray in the name of Christ implies also praying in his spirit, that is, in the spirit of him who commits all things to the Divine will. "In that way all our prayers become acceptable to God, and are always answered by Him, though not always by immediately ensuing success. This was not the case even with the prayers of that holy and divinely-directed soul."[1] Wessel always treats the Lord's Prayer as the noblest and best of all prayers, and conceives that he puts honour upon it, by not merely using it as a formula to be recited, but conceiving and searching it in a lively and intelligent way, as an immeasurable treasure of deep and animating thoughts. This he does every where in the Books on prayer,[2] proving thereby, what in several passages he commends and acknowledges, namely, the inexhaustible fertility and close connection of its several parts; in which respect even the most pregnant discourse of a classic, as, for instance, Demosthenes, is not to be compared with it.[3]

Along with these essential means for nourishing and exercising piety, Wessel does not reject other expedients for training the mind to abstraction from the objects of sense, and the ideas and fancies which disturb it, and to tranquillity and composure within itself; such, for instance, as logical, mathematical, and other scientific exercises. These, however, he always considers as merely subordinate and preparatory, and not as of direct utility; because, for example, even though mathematical exercises, while we are occupied with them, exclude bad movements of the mind, they still do not admit those that are good and pious.[4] On this principle, he also approves the attempts of Pythagoras and his school. He values arithmetic as an elementary study, considers mathematics as an admirable exercise of the powers of thought and abstraction, and therefore, as a means of fixing the ideas, concentrating the faculties, and so indirectly purifying the heart.[5] But the moral appliances for confirming and cleansing the mind, especially love to God, appear to him infinitely superior;[6] and

[1] De Orat. i. 15, p. 26.

[2] A short and comprehensive exposition is, for instance, to be found de Orat. ii. 3, p. 45—48.

[3] De Orat. ii. 1, p. 41.

[4] De Orat. i. 4, p. 11.

[5] De Orat. i. p. 10—12. Scal. Medit. i. 13, p. 211—213.

[6] Scal. Medit. i. 14, p. 213 and 214.

he is convinced, that it is impossible to attain to love in what may be called a physical way, viz., by purging the soul from false fancies,[1] but very possible to attain through love to a true purification of the soul.

On the ascetics of strictly *cloisteral life*, Wessel expresses no positive opinion. It is evident, however, from the whole of his sentiments that he did not regard life in the monastery as intrinsically a higher stage of Christian piety, and could only value it, when it appeared, as among the Brethren of the Common Lot, associated with freedom of mind and animated with genuine Christian piety.[2] In this sense, he even extols the holy monks and hermits of Christian antiquity. Everything in his eyes derived its value from the spirit in which it was conceived and performed. On this he makes the value of a life spent in chaste virginity to depend, when he says, "The end which renders virginity laudable is the perfect freedom with which it enables us to live to God."[3] He does not, therefore, reject a virgin life of itself, but he lays more stress upon spiritual than upon bodily, chastity; and in this respect, by no means shares the extravagant notions of his contemporaries. It may here also be remarked, that in reference to the *worship of Mary*, he on the whole expresses the mediæval sentiments and faith. He decidedly embraces the doctrine of the absolute virginity of Mary even after the birth of the Saviour.[4] He considers the remembering of the mother of God, as well as of God and God's Son, to be an essential part of piety, and compares this constant commerce of the mind with her to the fellowship with Christ which is founded on the Lord's Supper.[5] Accordingly, although this was the point on which in early youth he opposed his older friend,[6] he yet, in the course of his life, shews himself to be here a true disciple of *Thomas à Kempis*. At the same time, it is true the veneration of Mary has by no means the same weight and practical importance for him as for his master.[7]

[1] . . . phantasmatibus.

[2] Comp. *Scholtz* Dissert. über Thomas v. Kempen, Gerh. Groot und Wessel, s. 89 sq.

[3] De Commun. Sanctor. p. 820.

[4] De Orat. iii. 7, p. 64, with which compare Scal. Medit. i. 3, p. 197, and Exemp. Scal. Medit. iii, p. 407.

[5] Scal. Medit. i. 20, p. 221.

[6] See supra p. 273.

[7] See supra p. 125, 126, and 156.

PART THIRD.

WESSEL'S RELATION TO AFTER TIMES. RELATIVE LITERATURE.

CHAPTER FIRST.

OPINIONS RESPECTING WESSEL. HIS PERMANENT INFLUENCE AND CONNECTION WITH THE REFORMATION.

Among all the men whom we have hitherto contemplated, no one is more closely connected with the Reformation than Wessel, and to no one in this respect have contemporaries and successors, and even the heroes of the great achievement, awarded higher acknowledgments. With the sincere reverence felt for him by numerous scholars, was united a reputation which, even in the later stages of his life, was very considerable, and would have grown to a still greater magnitude after his death, if the period which ensued had not cast all its immediate antecedents into the shade. Let us listen, however, to some of the more weighty opinions expressed concerning him.

Even *Erasmus* speaks of Wessel with high respect, and in contrast with Luther, praises his Christian moderation.[1] He receives, however, more decided applause from men who were of congenial minds, and pursued a similar course. Among these the Jurist, William *Sagarus*, occupies the first place. This person, a native of Zealand, himself a distinguished

[1] Epist. ad Fratres infer. et orient. Fris. Opp. t. x. p. 1622.

scholar and writer on jurisprudence, and the councillor of Charles V. in the government of Brabant, was so enthusiastic an admirer that, as Albert Hardenberg, an eye-witness, relates, he accompanied his old and venerable father on a journey to Adwerd, partly to see this celebrated monastery, and partly to glean information respecting Wessel.[1] "He carried in his bosom the work on the Causes of the Incarnation, which was quite worn with use, solemnly averred that he had learned from it to know Christ, and earnestly implored us, if we possessed any authentic memorial or information respecting the author, to impart them to him. We showed him the printed works. I myself possessed a few manuscripts, and sought out several others. I had also copies of Wessel's elegy and epitaph. I travelled with him to the monastery of the Nuns at Groeningen, where John von Halen, the governor, showed us Wessel's skull. This he embraced and kissed with reverence, and offered ten pounds Flemish[2] if they would give it to him; but some of the old superstitious dames refused, and said that they had once seen writings and papers of Wessel committed to the flames, on the suspicion of heresy; and that the stranger gentleman was perhaps a Lutheran, who wished to make an idol of the skull, and practise sorcery with it. In other respects the old ladies spoke of Wessel with veneration, and showed among their prayer-books several which he had bequeathed to them. Some of these, which seemed really to have been Wessel's, I caused to be copied for Sagarus, and sent them to him with other writings." We have similar testimonials of reverence from other men in Wessel's immediate vicinity, especially *Praedinius*, *Geldenhauer*, and *Hardenberg;* and these we shall cite in the sequel.

It is more remarkable, however, to hear his praises echoing from Germany and even out of the mouths of the Reformers and their friends. Here *Luther* is the first to speak. In the preface to a small collection of Wessel's Essays,[3] he selects the strongest terms to express his profound esteem for the departed, and acknow-

[1] Quoted word for word from Hardenberg's Life of Wessel, p. 15, 16.

[2] . . . obtulit decem libras Flandricas.

[3] Farrago Rerum Theologicarum, doctiss. viro *Wesselo* Groning. autore, which appeared with Luther's preface at Basle in 1522, and was several times republished.

ledges him in the fullest sense as his precursor.[1] Among other things, he says: "And now, too, this Wessel comes forward into the light, otherwise called Basil, who was a native of Groeningen in Friesland, and possessed a noble intellect, and great mind, such as are now rarely to be found. It is evident that he was truly taught of God, as Isaiah prophesied of Christians like him; for we cannot suppose that he received his doctrine from man any more than I myself did. *And if I had read Wessel sooner, my adversaries would have presumed to say, that I had borrowed my whole doctrine from him. Our minds are so consonant to each other.* From this I derive a particular joy and fortitude; and no longer doubt that my doctrine is sound, seeing that such a person (although living in another age and climate, accustomed to another mode of life, and placed in other circumstances) not only always agrees with me in meaning, but even uses the self-same words." There can also be little doubt, that long afterwards Wessel's writings influenced the formation of the German Reformer's opinions.

Next to Luther comes *Melancthon.* And the reverence which he, the great teacher of Germany, cherished for Wessel, appears even from Saxo's panegyric upon Rudolph Agricola, which we may venture to consider as at least indirectly Melancthon's work, and an expression of his opinion. Elsewhere, however, he also speaks in high terms of him, praising his excellent erudition and recommending his works. Like Luther, he acknowledges that "on most of the main articles of the Evangelical creed, Wessel's views had been the same that are taught now after the purification of the Church; and if at present particular points by God's help are more fully inculcated, the cause is, that the sentiments of different parties are enlivened and developed in their contact with each other, — an advantage of which Wessel was destitute in his isolated position."[2]

[1] Luther's Werke in Walch's ed. Th. xiv. p. 220 and 221.

[2] See *Melanchthon's* Postille, edited by Pezel, B. i. p. 602. The passage, which Fr. *Galle*, the able expounder of Melancthon's Theology, was so good as to point out to me, runs: "Patrum nostrorum memoria fuit valde doctus vir, cujus scripta extant, *Wesselus Groningensis.* Nomen Wesselus puto esse nomen Basilii. Audivi Capnionem narrantem de eo, quod Parisiis expulsus sit propterea, quia dogmata quaedam

But not merely among the Wittemberg Reformers did Wessel stand in high esteem. This was equally the case with those of Switzerland. I can indeed produce no positive statement of *Zwingli* to the effect; but it is proved by fact. Wessel, as I believe I have clearly demonstrated by evidence, exercised a powerful influence on the formation of this Reformer's doctrine of the Supper; and he may also have done the same with *Oecolampadius*. We are not, however, wholly destitute of an express testimony from this circle. The first who, after the Wittemberg edition, published the miscellaneous writings of Wessel, was Dr Adam *Petri* of Basle, and, in 1523, he writes to his friend Conrad *Faber*, Professor of Divinity at Küsnacht,[1] in the following terms, respecting Wessel: "Behold, most learned sir, what an author has been removed out of the way, and by what sort of men, and for what cause! But God, who sets bounds to the rage of the impious, as he does to the waves of the sea, has not permitted these writings wholly to perish. In what other, excepting only the Bible, have you ever seen the whole work of Christ and the contents of Scripture set forth with clearer arguments, or those impostors and enemies of God combated with stronger ones? In what other have you found the traditions of men more effectually shaken and obscured? This, however, is the surest proof that the work is from God. For where we find human inventions, there no one believes that Christ or God's Word can be, just as

scholasticorum improbarit. De plerisque capitibus religionis Evangelicae sensit idem, quod a nobis nunc traditur, postquam nostra aetate repurgatio Ecclesiae facta est. Scripta Wesseli sunt bona, si quis cum quadam dexteritate et non cavillatorie judicet. Dei beneficio jam singula traduntur explicatius. Non habuit tunc multos, cum quibus conferre posset sententias suas. Magis illustrantur res, quando plures conferunt studium et operam, sicut dicitur: ὁμιλία ἔτεκε τέχνας. 'Ferrum ferro acuitur, sic vir virum acuit.' Capnio narrabat Wesseli morem fuisse, ut partem temporis tribueret lectioni Bibliorum hebraicae, quia fuit bene doctus in linguis, partem vero tribueret aliis docendis. Docuit autem simul hebraice et doctrinae Ecclesiae summam explicavit et conjunxit philosophica. Postea consenuit in Phrysia. Et scripsit mihi Pater seu prior Groningensis, ante multos annos, se audivisse illius colloquia cum Rodolpho Agricola de iisdem rebus, quae nunc proponuntur in nostris Ecclesiis." In the preface to Rud. Agric. Dialect. Melancthon also mentions Wessel.

[1] The letter is printed at the beginning of *Wesseli* Opp. p. 11 and 12.

all the other stars disappear at the rising of the sun. I could wish, therefore, that this author were first perused by those who, inflated with their wisdom and erudition, attempt to mould the Christian life according to philosophical ideas. . . . I hope however, that he will now effectually influence the minds of all, if they would but read him; for he teaches not as they do, but as one that hath authority. I could wish, also, that he were read by those who, destitute of charity, and puffed up with knowledge, give offence to the weak in Christ, and speak rashly on subjects where this is least decent, and in the way most injurious to the Church of Christ. . . . . Inasmuch, then, as in thee we have a living pattern of Christian gravity and modesty, so have we, if I may use the word, a glorified one in Wessel. And therefore it is, that, although yourself adorned with all theological gifts, you have not scrupled to call him, "The great theologian."

Even from these testimonies, it appears how powerful was the influence exercised by Wessel upon susceptible minds, and how while kindling and warming all in its vicinity, his spirit, at the same time radiated to a distance. The language of facts is even stronger. From the localities in which he was permitted to labour for any considerable time, there went forth what may properly be called a reformatory *tradition*. This, as we have seen, was the case at *Heidelberg*; but we find it in a much higher degree at *Groeningen*—a town which, of all the cities in the Netherlands, was, no doubt through Wessel's influence, next to Antwerp, the one most deeply imbued with the principles of the Reformation at the commencement of the great commotion. In particular, it was the scene of a remarkable disputation, in which we unquestionably recognise effects ultimately connected with his spirit. As we have seen, he possessed at Groeningen, in Adwerd, and in the whole neighbourhood, numerous friends and scholars. These, in their turn, attracted others to the same sentiments, and so, about the middle of the 16th century, there arose, in this district, a whole generation friendly to the Reformation. The centre of the circle appears to have been the preacher, William *Friederici*,[1] the friend of Wessel, Agricola, and Erasmus,

[1] See respecting him vol. 1, p. 400.

an excellent, enlightened, and godly man, and who, particularly from the year 1521, actively laboured for a pure Gospel, in a very influential situation. At his side we find the two jurists, Eberhard *Jarghes*, and Hermann *Abring*, the Rector (Gymnasiarcha) of the St Martin's School, Nicolaus *Lesdorp*, and two other distinguished scholars, John *Timmermann*, and Gerhard *Pistoris;* and doubtless there were also many more whose names have not been handed down. In opposition to the liberal views of these men, the Dominicans, the brethren of a certain Grabow, who was also a lector in the town,[1] thought themselves bound, at Groeningen, as in every other place, to do their utmost. They, therefore, posted certain theses in defence of the Pope's monarchical power, and issued a challenge to *a disputation*, which took place in 1523, in the Dominican Convent, and which, although it did not lead to a decisive result, was yet the occasion of a very important manifestation of reformatory opinions.

The Dominicans—Master Laurentius, Brother Ludolph, and the Sub-prior Pittinck, who presented themselves as disputants —had set up the proposition,[3] That there pertain originally to Christ as God and man, both a priestly and a monarchical power, in virtue of which he is Ruler over all. That this sovereignty has been transferred to his representative, the Bishop of Rome, and that to him belongs of perfect right the authority of the two swords, the temporal and the spiritual, of which the one is to be wielded by the Church, and the other, for it and at its direction, by the magistracy. It is easy to conceive the many objections made by the friends of the Reformation to these principles. I shall cite but a few. Hermann *Abring*[4] observed, that as Christ rejected, both by word and act, all public honours and dignities—refusing to be a king himself, and recommending to his followers only ministering humility—every clergyman, if he wishes to be Christ's successor, is thereby excluded from

[1] See supra p. 167 and 168.

[2] See on the subject *Gerdes* Hist. Reform. iii. 32, and besides Monum. p. 25 sqq. Comp. also *Hofstede de Groot* Geschied. der Broederenkerk te Groeningen p. 20 sqq.

[3] The acts of the disputation are to be found in *Gerdes* in l. c. Monum. p. 26 sqq. The theses of the Dominicans in particular at p. 29 and 30.

[4] Ibid. p. 32 sq.

all temporal sovereignty. Christ was not even a priest in the ordinary sense of the word, not to speak of a monarch or an emperor, and consequently neither can his representative be so. John *Timmermann*,[1] supported the proposition, That no power, either spiritual or temporal, can lay an obligation upon the conscience, except when it prescribes what Christ has prescribed already. The Pope has power to dispense from human, but not from Divine, laws. "When the Pope," he said,[2] "appoints festivals which the minister of Groeningen finds injurious to his people, the minister of Groeningen is authorised to set them aside, in opposition to the commands of the Pope. For to what purpose would he be a pastor, if he did not watch over the flock committed to his care? Not to the Bishop of Rome have thy sheep been entrusted. Thou art the shepherd. Otherwise one shepherd would have sufficed for the whole Christian world. . . . I will not defraud the Pope of his rights;[3] nay, I claim for him what Christ by the authority of the Gospel has invested him with; and that is the ministry of the word and the sword of the Spirit. Still, the Spirit is not so peculiarly the prerogative of the priest of Rome, as that the Church and every other priest do not possess it in common with him." The Rector Nicolaus *Lesdorp*, who distinguished himself by his ability as a disputant, objected to the exclusive right of the Romish Bishop, that of the Bishops of Alexandria and Antioch,[4] and said: If Christ possessed a monarchical power, of which every one of his successors partakes, it must belong in an equal measure to all bishops; for all bishops are equally his representatives, nor has he devolved his monarchy upon any one in particular. The episcopal office, however, is no lordship, but a ministry and a charge. It does not become a bishop to play the prince. He is a servant and a shepherd, and has to care for others, not for himself. On one of the Dominicans replying to this, that Christ nevertheless came forward as a sovereign at the cleansing of the temple, Lesdorp gave the matter a jocular turn, and said:[5] Oh no; He rather acted the part of a schoolmaster; for he used the scourge. And so when I whip my scholars, I may perhaps flatter myself that I am a better follower of Christ than either the Pope

[1] Ibid. p. 38 sq. [2] Ibid. p. 47, 48. [3] Ibid. p. 46.
[4] Ibid. p. 54—57. [5] Ibid. p. 57, 58.

or the Emperor, who punish misdemeanours with the sword. This humorous sally was not ill taken even by the Dominicans. Their speaker at the conclusion returned thanks for the able opposition which they had met,[1] appealed to the words of Augustine, "That disputation should lead to truth, and not truth to disputation," and invited all the theologians who were present to an entertainment, where there would be no interdict against a literary jest.

The discussion produced no immediate effect, but it was a sign of the times. It had shewn that the principles enunciated by Wessel and his scholars, and especially the shoots of Biblical knowledge which he had planted—for all the speakers shewed intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, and cited texts in the most pertinent way—had struck strong roots in his native city. It had evinced the intellectual superiority of the friends of the Reformation. It had undoubtedly strengthened their party, as even the Dominicans were afraid to mingle hatred in their attack. And it inspired them with that heightened confidence, in virtue of which they shortly after formed themselves into a communion of their own.

The Rector *Lesdorp*, who distinguished himself so greatly on the occasion, no doubt trained his scholars in the sentiments he expressed. At his death he was succeeded by Regner *Praedinius*,[2] who was born in 1508 at Winsum, hence also styled Reinier van Winsum, and died in 1559 at Groeningen. This still more celebrated Rector of the St Martin's School, was trained in the Brother-house at Groeningen, and there shared the same apartment with Albert Hardenberg.[3] He was on the one hand so accomplished a philologist, as to be styled the modern Cicero, and on the other so thorough a theologian, that he connected whatever occurred to him in life and science with Chris-

[1] Gerdes p. 60.

[2] Respecting him see besides, *Delprat* p. 57 and 103, Vitae Profess. Groning. fol. 36. *Gerdes* Hist. Ref. iii. 192 sq., and the Florileg. libr. rar. p. 282, by the same author; *Paquot* Mem. lit. ix. 421, and *van Swinderen* in der gröninger Monatschrift 1809, s. 33.

[3] Hardenberg, after having extolled Regner *Prädinius*, Gymnasiarcha Groningensis, as vir longe doctissimus, says: Nam Groningae a pueris una in eodem cubiculo in aedibus Fratrum habitavimus, et in eodem lecto multo tempore dormivimus.

tian truth, and tried it by the Holy Scriptures. Quite in the primitive spirit of the Brotherhood, when he had finished his education and returned to his native town, he would accept of no other office than that of a teacher, partly because it was the most congenial to his mind, and parly because he believed that it offered him a better opportunity than any other of being useful to society and the Church.[1] He accordingly undertook the direction of the St Martin's School, and there daily gave four lessons[2] with such enthusiasm and intelligence, that the establishment rose under his direction to the highest prosperity, numbered scholars from east and west Friesland, Brabant, Flanders, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Poland, and grew to a sort of Academy. This man, although not personally—for he was not born till after his death—was yet indirectly, by means of Wessel's works, really one of his disciples and, in the scriptural, practical, and liberal spirit of his master, composed the several theological treatises[3] he has left. From these it will not be here superfluous to cite a few sentences. The word of God,[4] he says, has not been given to us for strife and disputation, but to acquaint us with God, that we may cleave to him and live a pious and holy life. He derives the work of redemption solely from the free love of God; for he could discover nothing in man which can be a ground of merit in the sight of God; and faith, which is the condition of salvation, appeared to him a gift of that Divine Spirit which worketh as it will.[5] The nature of the redemption he conceived as follows:[6] "When Christ declares, I am the resurrection and the life, we must suppose that both of these things were in him in a singular and peculiar way, for, as he sacrificed

[1] See Gerdes in l. c. p. 193.

[2] The authors whom he principally read with his scholars were Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Galen, and in Latin Cicero and Quintilian.

[3] The works of Praedinius were published by his scholar Joh. *Acronius* Basil. per Oporinum 1563, whose preface respecting his labours may be compared. Praedinius had committed to the flames his annotations upon the ancient authors, but bequeathed to posterity his theological treatises. Extracts from these are given by Gerdes in l. c. p. 194 sq.

[4] Gerdes in l. c. p. 194.

[5] Ibid. p. 195—199.

[6] Ibid. p. 199.

sin upon the cross, he abolished the cause of death; and as he was born pure, and lived his whole life in perfect accordance with the Divine law, death could have no power over him; but immortal life belonged to him as a right by the Divine laws. Believers, however, are engrafted into the Lord by faith, as the members are knit to the body. They become, in the Divine estimation, one with him. It is, therefore, neither strange nor difficult to understand that he is resurrection and life to his people. Both things are in him, and believers are one with him. It would rather be difficult to conceive how both, being in Christ, they who are one with Him should not also live." On these principles, Praedinius of course could recognise only living faith as true faith. He only who actually lives in Christ believes on him. Whoever still lives after the flesh has a mere fiction of faith.[1] Respecting outward exercises, Wessel's disciple judged quite in the spirit of his master. In his opinion prayer, as the free utterance of the heart, ought not to be fixed to set times. The observance of the Sabbath he considered as proper, but thought that the day should not be reckoned intrinsically holier than any other. He deplored the contests among Protestants respecting the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper, remarking, "It is a consequence of our sins, that what ought by its nature to be the strongest bond of union among Christians has become an inexhaustible source of the bitterest strife."[2] This person, the honoured teacher of so vast a number of scholars from all lands, likewise imbued them with the principles of the Reformation, and thus the spirit of Wessel diffused itself in ever wider circles.

Next to him and Hardenberg, his fellow-student, whose ac-

[1] Ibid. p. 197.

[2] Ibid. p. 200 and 201.

[3] *Praedinius* partly expresses his reverence for Wessel in his works, partly shows it by the affection with which he preserved a relic of him (Chytraei Saxon. Lib. xx. p. 250: Regn. Praedinius Wesseli ossa inferioris maxillae velut reliquias sacras mihi monstrabat.) He imbued his scholars with the same sentiments. Two of them, John Acronius and John Arcerius Theodoretus, express themselves in the most honourable terms respecting Wessel; the first in the Praefat. in Opp. Praedin. p. 4 and 5; the second in the Epist. dedic. to his edition of Jamblichi vit. Pythag. Francof. 1598.

quaintance we shall afterwards make, we have to mention Gerhard *Geldenhauer*.[1] He, too, the pupil of Hegius, the friend of Wessel's familiar acquaintance, Oestendorp, and belonging to the society of his admirers, circulated his reformatory doctrines in journeys through the Netherlands and Germany. He had been a zealous student of Wessel's works, from which he derived his first acquaintance with Gospel truth. But when extravagant admirers of his master sometimes said to him, "Our master, Wessel, the great philologist, doctor and professor in all the faculties, the orator, poet, and I know not what all, yea, the light of the world, has said this, taught that, and written so and so,"—he did towards Wessel, what Wessel himself once did towards Thomas Aquinas,[2] suspended the study of his writings, in order not to be led away from the fountain of Scripture by partiality for a human authority, particularly on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.[3] He recollected too well the words of Wessel to Oestendorp, in which he had foretold the overthrow of the old theological authorities, Thomas, Bonaventura, and others.

After all this it is scarcely necessary to prove that Wessel was a *pioneer of the Reformation* in general, and a *precursor of Luther* in particular. Nobody states the fact in stronger language than Luther himself, when he declares that it might appear as if he had borrowed all his doctrine from Wessel. Since that declaration made in 1522,[2] and consequently about thirty-three years after Wessel's decease, scarcely any one has doubted that he did *pave the way for the Reformation*; and among modern authors, not only does Seckendorf[4] depict him at large in that capacity, but Bayle[5] expressly calls him, *The* precursor of Luther. It is true that against this relative position of the two men, several differences in their doctrines and principles might be, and, in fact, were alleged even at the time of the Reformation. A polemic of that period, of no small distinction, and who, with indefatigable zeal, spoke, wrote, and laboured against the ecclesias-

[1] Respecting him see vol. 1., p. 405 and 406, and the citations in the note.

[2] See supra p. 315.

[3] The fact is related in *Adami* Vitae Theologor. p. 44.

[4] Commentar. de Lutheranismo Lib. i. sect. 54. §. 133. s. 226 sq.

[5] Diction. hist. et crit. T. iv., p. 2868. ed. 1720. p. 494. edit. 1740.

tical reformation by Zwingli, John *Faber*,[1] previously vicar to the Bishop of Constance, where he opposed in particular the reformation in Switzerland, and then Bishop of Vienna, where he continued the war against the Protestants in the Austrian States and the whole of Germany, wrote an original little

[1] At the time of the Reformation, there were two persons of the name of *John Fabri*, who appeared upon the arena as violent polemics against the work and persons of the Reformers. The one, born about 1500 or 1504 at Heilbronn, entered the Dominican order at Wimpfen, studied at Cologne, took the degree of Doctor of Theology, filled the office of preacher at Augsburg and Prague, and lived until the year 1558 or perhaps longer. In a series of writings he no doubt declaimed against the Lutherans; his first appearance as an author, however, is at a later date; And in the year 1528, when the work of which we are here to treat was written at Prague, he was not yet in that city. The author of this work, and therefore the person whom we mean, is the second *John Fabri*, or more usually *Faber*, who was born in 1478 at Leutkirchen, in the Algau. He was the son of a smith, named Heigerlin, was early enlisted by the Dominicans, became first of all vicar in Lindau, and, after having attained at Friburg to the honour of a doctor juris canonici, preacher in his native town, then official to the Bishop of Basle, and next vicar to the Bishop of Constance; in addition to which he received from Rome the honour of an Apostolic protonotary. In this office, at Constance, he at the first resisted the preacher of indulgences, Samson; but afterwards altered his opinion, and took the field against Zwingli, with whom in 1523 he held a celebrated discussion. To this might be applied the remark of Luther upon another occasion: Totus Faber nihil est nisi Patres, Patres, Concilia, Concilia. (Luthers Briefe Th. 2. s. 366, in de Wette.) Thenceforward he became one of the foremost champions of the Catholic party. Archduke Ferdinand of Austria appointed him his secretary, councillor, and confessor. He become controversial preacher to the holy Roman empire, provost of Ofen, and at last, in 1531, bishop of Vienna, where, upon the 21st May 1541, he departed this life. There exist a considerable number of controversial writings from his pen. The one we are about to cite, was written in 1528 at Prague, after his return from an embassy to England. Information respecting him and his writings may be found, not only in Spalatin, Sleidan, and Seckendorf, but in *Mencken* Script. rer. Saxon. T. ii. p. 619; *Hottinger* helvet. K. Gesch. Th. 3. s. 41. *Arnold's* Kirch. u. Ketz. Hist. Th. 2. B. 16. c. 8. §. 3; *Jöcher* Gel. Lex. Th. 2. s. 466; *Rotermund* erneuertes Andenken der Männer, die für und gegen die Reform. Lutheri gearbeitet haben. B. 1. s. 318 ff., but, particularly, in a special Dissertation de Joannis *Fabri* Vita et Scriptis. Lips. 1737, by C. E. *Kettner*, where comp. §. 12, s. 30 and 31. Respecting the other John Fabri notices may be found in Jöcher and Rotermund in l. c.

work,[1] for the purpose of comparing the doctrines of John Huss, the Picards, or in other words, the Waldenses, and Wessel, with the principles of Luther, and of shewing that in many points they are contradictory, but that those earlier parties were much more Christian and deserving of toleration than Luther.[2] He represents it as a great imprudence on Luther's part to extol Wessel so excessively, and characterise him as a divinely instructed man, seeing that, in at least thirty articles, they manifestly contradict each other, as, for instance, Wessel maintains the freedom of the human will, which Luther denies; Wessel admits the validity of many ecclesiastical ordinances and traditions, which Luther repudiates; Wessel acknowledges the Pope, whereas Luther refuses him the right of existence,[3] and so forth.

[1] The title of this rare tract, the inspection of which I owed to the courtesy of the late Beesenmeyer, is *Wie sich Johannis Huss, der Pickarder, und Johannis von Wessalia, Leren und Buecher mit Martino Luther vergleichen.* Beschrieben durch Doctor Johann *Fabri.* The preface is dated from Prague in Bohemia, 1st Sept. anno 1528. At the close of the little work there stands, Gedruckt tzu Leyptzck, durch Valten Schumann. des jarss 1528. It contains nine sheets in quarto. According to the title, it might be supposed that Fabri wished to compare Luther not with Wessel but with John of Wesel. He confounds the names, but, in point of fact, John Wessel is the person whom he means. This clearly appears from the introduction of the Comparison of Luther with Wessel, where he cites the opinion given by the former of the latter, and from the whole content of the doctrine which he produces as Wessel's.

[2] In the preface, among other remarks, he says, "Nevertheless, we find in truth that John Huss, the Picards, and Wessel (these three are several times spoken of as constituting a party,) are in somewhere about thirty-one articles more tolerable and Christian than Luther."

[3] As *Faber's* work is certainly accessible to few readers, I shall here give a condensed extract from his *Comparison between Wessel and Luther*, which forms the third and last part of it, and, after a short introduction, states the differences between the two in the following order: Nro. 1—3. Wessel considers man as fellow-worker with God in that which is good, and likewise ascribes some value to man's own endeavours after sanctification; Luther does away with man's freedom of will and co-operation in good works. 4. Wessel declares the Epistle of James to be canonical; Luther says that it is made of straw. 5. Wessel invokes the mother of God, and even the malefactor on the cross, for their intercession; Luther rejects all invocation of the saints. 6—8. Wessel recognises the sacrifice of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and requires that the Eucharist shall be received only from the hand of a priest; Luther denies the sacrifice in the Supper, in order that the

It cannot be denied that there does exist a difference between the two; and who would expect a man like Luther to be the mere counterfeit of one who had gone before him? There would in that case have been no progress in the Reformation itself. Here, however, little or nothing depends on particular doctrinal statements, but much upon the grounds and general tendency of their whole religious and theological views. And

mass may have no foundation, and taught, at least for a considerable period, that every Christian may take the Eucharist for himself; "Since then his Saxon friends have quaffed the supposed blood as if it was beer in a cask." (A high style of controversy!) 9. Wessel confesses that no Pope has ever been holier or mightier than St Peter, (and thereby accordingly recognises Peter as a Pope, and, of course, the Pope in general); Luther repudiates the Pope altogether, and places Peter on a level with the rest of the Apostles. 10. Wessel praises the appointment of festivals and fasts: Luther treats both as human inventions. 11. Wessel distinguishes in the Gospel between commands and counsels; Luther denies that there is any such distinction. 12. Wessel writes that the keys of heaven and the care of the world are entrusted to Peter; this Luther will not allow. 13. Wessel sanctions a specially consecrated priesthood, and distinguishes it from that which is general; Luther will have no special priesthood. 14. According to Wessel the Apostles were made bishops and priests by the consecration of the Holy Ghost; according to Luther they were nothing of the kind. 15, 16. Wessel admits that from the first, many proper observances were introduced by the Church to ornament the sacraments, and that these are many in number; Luther not only rejects these decorations of the sacramental rites, but as respects the number of the sacraments, "holds, sometimes that there are one, sometimes two, and sometimes three, according as we happen to be in the constellation of the Crab or the tale of the Dragon." 17. According to Wessel, the sacraments of the New Testament confer grace, which Luther denies. 18. Wessel holds that a perfect life is attainable by Christians even upon earth; Luther, that it is not. 19. Wessel ascribes value to the Church's baptismal customs; Luther contemns them. 20. Wessel admits casuum reservatio, and the imposition of penance by the priest; Luther holds that a chaplain has as much power as a priest, the priest as much as the bishop, and, in fine, the peasant as much as all the three, bishop, priest, and chaplain. 21. Wessel considers the communion of saints as an essential article, Luther as a mere gloss upon one. 22. Wessel approves of fasts, festivals, and vigils; Luther does not. 23 and 24. Wessel believes that fasting, prayer, the celebration of the Mass, and other good works of the clergy, are beneficial to every man who desires them, and that even a priest may take the sacrament for others, against all of which Luther contends. 25. In like manner he rejects masses for the dead, which are sanctioned by Wessel. 26. Wessel praises

in these the two decidedly harmonise. Wessel, even in his day, carried in his bosom the embryo of that which, after a time, under more favourable circumstances, and by the aid of still greater personages, produced the Reformation. Even his conscientious and intrepid love of truth, open to every convincing appeal, ranks him, in point of sentiment, with the Reformers. It was just this conscientiousness in regard to truth, adhering to what was proved, but always prepared with a youthful alacrity to adopt what was purer and better, which constituted the refreshing spirit once more shed plenteously forth by the Reformers. And this spirit we already find in Wessel. In him, however, it remained a sentiment, whereas in the Reformers it grew to the most magnificent action. At the sametime, the subjective sense of truth, if left to itself, would never have achieved any great work. For that purpose, it required to embrace a genuine, exalted, and divine object, or, in other words, the living Christ, as he is depicted in the Bible, the sole and inexhaustible fountain of salvation, from which Spirit, love, peace, and a new divine life, stream forth upon all the individuals and races of the children of men. In thus cleaving to Christ as the sole Saviour from sin and its consequences, the sole author of all present good and future blessedness, Wessel no less completely harmonises with the Reformers; and the harmony is expressed in him, as it is in Luther and his fellow-labourers, by the two principles which constitute the general characteristics of the

the little crowns of the martyrs, fathers, and virgins, called *aureolas;* Luther laughs at them. 27. Wessel sanctions no contradiction in the confession of the truth; Luther has a multitude of Contradictoria, for example, the Hussites are heretics, and are not heretics: the Papacy is, and also is not, founded in the Gospel, and so forth. 28 and 29. Prayers for the dead, and the intercession of the angels are approved by Wessel; Luther reckons both inefficacious. 30. Wessel sees in confession an apostolical institute; Luther does not. 31. Wessel lays some weight upon tradition; Luther draws from no fountain but Scripture.—According to all this, Faber concludes with the assertion, that Luther's doctrine is not merely contrary to the Gospel, the Fathers, and the Councils, but even to the heretics; nay, than in more than 300 particulars he contradicts himself, as black does white, evil good, and Christ Belial. It is scarcely necessary to remark that in this Comparison of Faber's a multitude of errors are interwoven, as is evident, in particular, from the view he gives of Wessel's doctrines.

Reformation,—the formal one, of referring all religious knowledge to the Scriptures as the only credible, but at the same time sufficient, testimony of Christ, to the exclusion of all human authority; and the material one, of referring all Christian life to redemption and justification in Christ, exclusive of every other mean of salvation of mere human device. And just as in respect of Christian life, so also in respect of science, does Wessel share the position and opposition of the Reformers. At a period when, as Luther says, a very different breeze was blowing from that in the 16th century, he cherished the clearest conviction that the Scholastic theology must necessarily perish, and a new one come into life, strenuously combated the false influence of philosophy, especially Aristotelianism, upon theological science, and sought to give it a Scriptural, vital, and practical character. To this object, he rendered reviving philology subservient, and, like the Reformers, adopted into his system ingredients from the nobler mysticism of former and contemporaneous divines. Liberal-minded and enamoured of science, like the best of the Scholastics, pious and deep-souled like the genuine Mystics, he soared above the one-sidedness of both these mediaeval parties, extinguished in his mind the antagonism between them, by blending what was good in both, and by this means, also paved the way for that harmonic theology of the Reformers, which once more addressed itself to the whole man, and took the mind on every side under its care.

Wessel was also the precursor of the Reformation as a *man of learning*. It was no longer enough, merely to possess a purer practical knowledge of Christianity; the ability scientifically to defend it, was now likewise necessary. It behoved to enlist the whole acquisitions of knowledge in the service of the faith; and this qualification likewise we find in Wessel. Distinguished among the scholars of his time, by his Christian sentiments, he also distinguished himself among those whose sentiments were Christian, by a rich and liberal erudition, drawn directly from the original fountains. This has no doubt been shown in the preceding part of the work. But a review, retrieving various particulars that have been omitted, will not be uninteresting. Here, too, we shall discuss the literature of those works which we possess either from Wessel's pen or of which he is the subject.

CHAPTER SECOND.

WESSEL'S LEARNING. WORKS WRITTEN BY HIM AND ABOUT HIM.

1. WESSEL'S LEARNING.

The learning of Wessel, especially in reference to its extent, is very highly extolled by contemporaries. Partly on account of the riches of his knowledge, he was styled Lux mundi. The highest dignity in all the three faculties of theology, jurisprudence, and medicine, was ascribed to him; but it may be doubted whether he actually possessed it in any of them. In the superscription of one letter he is designated professor, and in that of another, doctor of theology. The former, however, may refer generally to his labours as a teacher, without implying that he held any fixed appointment as such; inasmuch as the present connection of the Universities with the State was not at that time formed, nor any strict distinction drawn between teachers who were as installed public professors, and teachers who were not. Whether he was a doctor in theology is a point which cannot be certainly determined; at least it cannot be proved when and where he received his degree. At the time of his residence at Heidelberg, which belongs to the evening of his life, he had not yet obtained it; nor do we know whether he had ever the opportunity of doing so in the sequel. On the mere authority of the inscription of a letter, I would not choose to assert this with certainty.[1] We are told, however, that he was also a doctor of Laws and of Medicine, and a learned surgeon and physician to the Bishop of Utrecht. As to this, there may be some exaggeration, at least in the form in which it has been handed down; but

[1] In the Libro Memoriali of the Church in which Wessel was buried he is designated as egregius Doctor sacrae Theologiae. Even here, however, the adjective *egregius* makes it much more likely that the expression *Doctor* refers to his theological learning, or readiness to teach theology, that to the possession of a degree.

from the numerous testimonies in Wessel's immediate vicinity, it must undoubtedly be presumed, that the fact had some foundation of truth. From the perusal of the ancients, as for instance of Galen, his extensive travels and daily life, Wessel must have gleaned some amount of medical knowledge, with which he frequently benefitted his friends and patrons, especially Bishop David.[1] It appears in general that—as was of old the case with the Essenes and Therapeutae—the care of the sick pertained to the customs of the Brethren of the Common Lot. In particular, we find it so with Florentius; and if Wessel had commenced the study of the medical art, when still perhaps a boy in the Brotherhouse at Zwoll, he might, without making it the business of his life, have easily increased his

[1] That Wessel's medical knowledge was considerable is taken by *Muurling* for a certain fact. He adheres to the belief that Wessel was body-physician to David of Burgundy, nay, for a short time, to one of the Popes (Ubbo *Emmius* Hist. Rer. Frisiac. L. xxx. p. 457.) Comment. de Wess. p. 38, and especially the sixth App. p. 114—116, where he treats the subject at large. It is true, there are important testimonies by contemporaries in favour of the supposition, namely, that of *Reuchlin*, communicated by Melancthon (Declamatt. T. i. p. 249, Praefat. ad R. Agricolae Dialect.); that of Antonius *Liber*, who, in the poem in which he welcomed Wessel, says, among other things: Tu modo noster eris *Galenus;* that of P. *Pelantinus*, who, in his elegy, likewise extols his extraordinary medical knowledge; that of Gerhard *Geldenhauer*, who says that Wessel was numbered among etiam Jureconsultis et Medicis Doctoribus; and, in fine, that of A. *Hardenberg*, who ascribes to his pen duo libelli practici in Medicina, and informs us that he was physician to David of Burgundy. (See the biographical notices of Wessel prefixed to the Groeningen edition of his works, in various passages, especially pages 21 and 22, and then in the work itself, p. 710.) To this we have now to add a notice in the recent communications respecting the Brotherhouses, by *Delprat* in Kist und Royaards kirchenhist. Archiv Th. 6, s. 297, where, on occasion of the illness of Albert von Kalkar, it is related, et tunc magister *Wesselus* affuit, offerens se et omnem operam suam pro *curatione ejus*. In the face of such various and direct testimonies, we shall not contest the fact itself. Comparing them, however, with what we otherwise know respecting Wessel, the statements appear to be somewhat panegyrical, and would require to be limited to a medical education and experience of a general kind. The instance which Paulus Pelantinus adduces of Wessel's professional practice (to wit, that he had inserted a clerical father—Pope? Bishop? monk?—into the belly of an ox, disembowelled while alive, and thereby restored afresh the failing powers of life) affords no reproof to the contrary; for such things were common, especially in that age. Comp. *Delprat* in l. c. p. 298.

proficiency, and acquired a good practical skill, which at that time was really the whole of medicine. There is no trace to be found in his life or writings of his having studied jurisprudence. He had enough to do with theology. One of the peculiarities of his age was to magnify and swell into the marvellous the amount of the positive knowledge and literary distinctions of celebrated men. Of this we have an example in Gerhard Groot. His great worth and imperishable merits were overlooked, and what was far less important, the moderate erudition he possessed was magnified into the fabulous and held to be above all praise. We have to repel a similar false glorification of Wessel. He was a learned man for the time,[1] particularly skilled in languages, and, by that means, well equipped for consulting the ancient fountains of religion and philosophy, but he was far from being a miracle of erudition and positive knowledge. Sound piety, firmly rooted in Christianity and the clearest intelligence,[2] a correct insight into the scientific, ecclesiastical, and moral defects of his age, a mind open for the better things which were looming in the future, and fortitude to labour for them by word and deed[3]—these were his merits, and not the mere volume of his acquirements. At the same time even his erudition was not despicable, and such as was then very uncommon. Although he did not, like the actual revivers of ancient literature, distinguish himself by the classical purity and elegance of his Latin style, nor sometimes even avoid mistakes, still he had a certain ease and readiness in the use of that tongue, and possessed a sufficient

[1] The want of information not possessed by his age will not be cast up as an objection to Wessel, such, for instance, as the popular notion of the immobility of the earth. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 339 : Non tam novum, si terra exsiliat fundamento suo, et per aera et aethera volitet etc.

[2] The clearness of his intellect qualified him in an especial manner for tuition. He says very pertinently : Signum scientis est posse docere. Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 11, p. 990.

[3] Wessel evinced a thoroughly practical spirit in theology, but how far he actually engaged in the practice of it we do not certainly know. It appears that he lived as a mere man of learning, and never preached or officiated in religious services. *Muurling*, p. 20, entertains the same doubt, and founds it upon two grounds, viz., because nothing is said on the subject, and because he neither possessed priestly ordination nor belonged to any monastic order.

knowledge of the two other learned languages to qualify him for consulting the originals.[1] It is true, we do not find in his works the traces of an accurate and philological study of Greek; but according to the unanimous report of contemporaries, his own declarations, and his whole intercourse with distinguished theologians, we have no reason to doubt his acquaintance with it. We know that he possessed the Gospels, and a copy of Gregory of Nazianzen, in the original. Alexander Hegius offers to send him other works in this language, and supplicates of him the loan of his Greek Evangelists, on the supposition that he could not long spare them. Everything obliges us also to suppose that he had read the writings of Plato and Aristotle in the original tongue. Besides, it is above all important to remark that Wessel was one of the few men of his day who were acquainted with Hebrew. It is indeed difficult to shew where he acquired this language. Most probably it was from learned Jews. Neither do we know what Hebrew manuscripts[2] he possessed, excepting that a psalter in the original is mentioned among the books which he left behind him. He likewise sought to stir up susceptible youths to the study of Hebrew, and gave them directions for it. This was probably the case with Reuchlin, who was the chief reviver of Hebrew literature, but much more certainly with Agricola.[3]

In order to characterise the education of Wessel, it is of some

[1] It ought not to be left unobserved that the Latin style of Wessel, although not unfrequently peculiar and ingenious, is yet often very obscure, and, in consequence of repetitions and climaxes, of a trailing character, nay, not always free from barbarisms, *e. g.* Scal. Medit. iii. 4, p. 260, and Epist. de Indulg. Cap. 11, p. 990, where the expression minoramentum occurs, nor even exempt from actual grammatical errors. Even *Luther* says of it, that it is not elegant, but trivialis ac pro seculo suo. With reference to Greek, he no doubt sometimes makes special grammatical observations, as, *e. g.*, Scal. Medit. iii. 2, p. 251. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 54, p. 566. It cannot be said, however, even here, that they are always pertinent, or important, or even always correct. He supposes, for example, that there is a superlative ἀγάθαρος of ἀγαθός. Scal. Medit. Ex. i. p. 331. Wessel's knowledge of the language extended only so far as that he could generally understand a Greek author.

[2] The first printed copy of the Hebrew Bible appeared a year after his death.

[3] See respecting both Wessel's life, p. 311 and 312.

consequence to know the authors whom he particularly mentions, quotes, and commends. Even from that, we may, in a certain degree at least, infer the tendency of his mind and the extent of his horizon as a man of learning. It is only in a certain degree, however, that this is practicable, for Wessel here and there cites an author of whom he had read little, and does not even mention others whom he had repeatedly perused. Thus we know that he had not only industriously read Rupert of Deutz, but, under the title of *Mare Magnum*, had formed a sort of Collection of beautiful passages from his works, and yet he does not so much as mention his name. We have the same reason to wonder, that although he appeals to the Platonicians, and especially to Proclus and Porphyry, he seldom adduces any passage from the works of Plato himself, of which he had no doubt read much. Accordingly, it is not essential to enumerate with absolute exactness the whole of the authors used by Wessel. It will suffice to mention those which especially attract our attention in reading his writings.

In the first place, Wessel makes frequent citations from almost all the books of the Old and New Testament, annexing sometimes a critical remark, *e. g.* when he designates the 1st Epistle of Peter as eminently genuine,[1] and sometimes a special reference to their peculiarities, as *e. g.* when he notices that in the Song of Solomon the name of God is only obscurely indicated, and never once occurs in the Book of Esther.[2] In certain cases he appeals also to the Septuagint[3] and the Vulgate.[4] Of religious, but not Christian, writings he mentions generally, but without any specific citation, the Talmud and the Koran.[5] The profane authors whom he notices, partly in a general way and partly with allusion to particular passages, are Homer, Plato,[6] Aristotle,[7] Theophrastus,[8] Alexander, whom he desig-

[1] De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 14, p. 446.
[2] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 88, p. 639.
[3] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 54, p. 566.
[4] De Orat. iii. 13, p. 77. De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 4. p. 419.
[5] De Orat. iii. 10, p. 71.
[6] De Orat. iv. 14, p. 78.
[7] Scal. Medit. iii. 5, p. 264. iv. 22, p. 308.
[8] Scal. Medit. iii. 3, p. 254.

nates as the acutest of the Peripatetics,[1] Demosthenes,[2] Plutarch, Proclus, Porphyry,—and among the Latins, Cicero,[3] Valerius,[4] Virgil, and Aulus Gellius.[5] Cicero, and next to him among Christian authors, Augustine,[6] are in particular recommended by him as models of style and the construction of sentences. Nay, without having himself any tincture of Ciceronianism, he lays down upon this point, in the 2d and 3d Books of the *Scala Meditationis*, a number of rules, which contain a kind of system of logic and rhetoric. Of older Christian authors Wessel mentions, with peculiar predeliction and not without annexing commendatory designations, such, for example, as *jubar ecclesiae, foecundum ingenium* and the like,[7] St Augustine, of whom he no doubt had read more, and from whom he borrowed more largely, than any of the Fathers, being in this respect also the forerunner of Luther. Next to him, from among the Latins, he chiefly quotes Jerome[8] and Gregory the Great;[9] from among the Greeks, Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Chrysostom; and finally from among the mediaeval divines and philosophers, St Bernard,[10] Peter the Lombard,[11] Hugo de St Victore,[12] Thomas, Scotus, Raymond Lully,[13] William Occam,[14] Peter d'Ally, Gerson,[15] Averroes,[16] and a less known writer, Gaufred,[17] the author of a treatise *contra superfluum timorem.* Of the authors nearer his own day, Wessel undoubtedly gave the preference to Gerson, whom he never mentions but with great respect, designating him, for instance, *Vene-*

[1] No doubt meaning Alexander von Aphrodisias.
[2] Scal. Medit. iii. 7, p. 278.
[3] Scal. Medit. ii. 19, p. 239. Ibid. p. 240. Lib. iii. 2, p. 251.
[4] De Orat. i. 4, p. 11.
[5] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 400.
[6] Scal. Medit. ii. 19, p. 239, 240. *Exempl. i. p. 233.*
[7] Scal. Medit. Exempl. ii. p. 370.
[8] Scal. Medit. Exempl. iii. p. 400.
[9] De Caus. Incarn. Cap. 10, p. 435. *Scal. Medit. iii. 7, p. 276.*
[10] De Caus. Incar. Cap. 8, p. 429. De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 81, p. 622. Scal. Medit. Exempl. i. p. 349.
[11] De Caus. Incar. Cap. 10, p. 435.
[12] De Orat. i. 13, p. 23.
[13] De Orat. i. 8, p. 17. Scal. Medit. iii. 4, p. 256.
[14] Scal. Medit. iv. 22, p. 308.
[15] De Orat. iii. 5, p. 59. v. 10, p. 103.
[16] De Caus. Incar. Cap. 4, p. 420.
[17] Scal. Medit. iv. 33, p. 322. iv. 15, p. 294.

rabilis ille Cancellarius. He has the same esteem for Peter d'Ally, Gerson's teacher and the father of all the celebrated French divines, calling him one of the most praiseworthy theologians. He refers less frequently to his contemporaries, although he does designate John of Wesel as *quinam doctor sublitis,*[1] and moreover makes frequent allusions to particular works of Rudolph Agricola.[2]

2. THE WORKS OF WESSEL.

Hardenberg relates[3] that after Wessel's death all the manuscripts found among his effects, were, by the zeal of the mendicant monks and the fury of some others, committed to the flames, and that the fact had been told him by persons highly worthy of credit who had seen it with their own eyes. It would be an inference from this that several of his writings had been intentionally destroyed. No doubt Oudin[4] impeaches this statement of Hardenberg's as a *fabula vel mendacium,* and says, It is a certain fact that Wessel was honourably interred, which gives us sufficient ground to conclude that no one had attacked him as a heretic after his death; besides, that after a considerable interval, a manuscript of the New Testament which had belonged to him, was preserved among the Canons of Mount St Agnes, and that consequently the rest of the writings which he left behind might also have been unassailed. These reasons, however, are evidently much too weak to overthrow the testimony of an author who is, in other respects, worthy of credit and nearly a contemporary. There is no contradiction between the facts, that the friends of Wessel secured for him a decent interment and that his enemies raged against his literary remains. And though *one* from among the books he left—and that a codex of the New Testament—remained uninjured, it does not follow that the rest were preserved. We do not, however, need the specific statement of Hardenberg, to acquaint us that several of

[1] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 39, p. 537.
[2] Scal. Medit. iii. 6, p. 274. iv. 15, p. 294. iv. 26, p. 314.
[3] In his biography of Wessel, p. 13.
[4] Oudinus de Scriptor. eccles. t. iii., p. 2711.

Wessel's writings were destroyed. The fact is certain from other information, and partly from intimations by the author himself. We have a few words to say of both classes of his writings, namely, those that have perished and those that have been preserved, and we mention first,

A. *The Lost Works of Wessel.*

1. Liber Notularum de Scripturis sacris et variis Scripturarum locis; de Creaturis; de Angelis; de Daemonibus; de Anima.
2. Liber alius magnus de Dignitate et Potestate Ecclesiastica; de Indulgentiis.
3. Libellus pro Nominalibus.[1]
4. De triduo Christi in sepulchro, pro Paulo Burgensi contra Middelburgensem.
5. Duo libelli practici in Medicina, ipsius Wesseli manu scripti exploratique in periclitantibus aegrotis.

These writings are enumerated and named by Hardenberg in his biography.[2] What is to be understood by the *Libelli practici in Medicina* cannot be precisely ascertained. Probably they were records in which, as a sort of day-book, Wessel inserted his medical experiences. In addition to the fore-mentioned, Hardenberg also speaks of a work *de Stabilitate et modo figendi meditationes.* It is, however, nothing but the *Scala meditationis.* Besides these, we know that there existed from the pen of Wessel,

[1] This work is entitled in the catalogue prefixed to the Gröningen edition: Notularum pro *Nominalibus* adversus Realium Formaliumque defensores, ac ex parte contra Rodolphum Agricolam Liber. Valde tamen obscurus, ut vix intelligi possit, quid auctor velit. *Fabricius* remarks upon in it in the Bibl. med. et inf. lat. Lib. ix. p. 169: Quem librum agnosco magis sapere auctorem *Joannem de Wesalia.* Wormatiensem, addictum Nominalibus, quam amicum Agricolae, Groningensem *Wesselum.* We know, however that Wessel was a Nominalist.

[2] P. 11. *Hardenberg* says of them: Jam delitescunt apud nobilem et erudite pium virum Dominum Christophorum ab Eussum, nepotem Domini Onnonis ab Eussum, cujus meminit Dominus Goswinus in epistola sua ad me, plura Wesseli nostri, quae per Dei voluntatem brevi in lucem edentur.

6. A volume under the title of *Mare Magnum*, containing excerpts at first from the works of Rupert of Deutz and afterwards of other authors, which appeared to the writer worthy of being noted.[1]

We learn, however, by incidental allusions of his own that there existed,

7. Liber de futuro seculo.[2]
8. Perhaps also a book de Peccatis, or, in particular, de Peccatis mortalibus.[3]
9. In fine, we ought probably to mention a treatise De Notitia et Visione Dei. This, however, is somewhat doubtful, as the passage in which it is mentioned[4] may also relate to the Book de futuro seculo, or to particular sections of other works.
10. Still more doubtful are other works, as the book de Moribus veterum haereticorum, and a German tract on the relation of subjects to the Magistracy.[5]

The fate of several of these lost works we can still trace up to

[1] See supra in the Life of Wessel p. 286. It may be here also remarked that one of the bulls of Wessel's friend Sixtus IV., began with the words Mare Magnum.

[2] This work is mentioned by Wessel de Magnit. Pass. p. 540.

[3] De Magnit. Pass. Cap. 10, p. 471, says Wessel: Sunt igitur peccata nostra mortalia, sed non mortua . . . *de quibus alibi scripsi peccatis.*

[4] De Orat. v. 10, p. 103: Cetera, quae de notitia et visione Dei quadrarent ad propositum, *quia alibi scripsi*, hic brevitatis causa omitto.

[5] The work de Moribus veterum haereticorum is quoted by *Wharton* in Append. ad Cav. Hist. Lit. p. 192, as having appeared at Leipsic in 1537. It is also mentioned by Gesner in the Biblioth. universalis T. i. p. 628, and no less by *Sweertius* Athen. Belg. p. 699. On the contrary, the Groeningen editor of Wessel's works says: quem tamen librum nusquam contigit videre—nor have I myself found any further traces of it. The other work is mentioned by Oudinus de Scriptor. eccles. t. iii. p. 2709: Editus est separatim ab aliis libellis quidam ejus Germanicus liber, titulo de *Subditis et Superioribus*, seu Quod subditi non usquequaque Rectoribus obedire cogantur: In eo admodum multa et graviter contra Papae et Praelatorum tyrannidem disputat. According to the contents which are stated, it may with certainty be supposed to have been a German translation of the work de Potestate ecclesiastica.

a certain point. The essays mentioned by Hardenberg Nro. 1—5, were at first entrusted to the charge of Goswin von Halen, who had once been Wessel's famulus, and was afterwards superintendent of the Brotherhouse at Groeningen. After his death they came into the possession of his nephew, John von Halen, the overseer of a monastery, and then into that of Regner Praedinius, the Rector of the Gymnasium, of the same town. Praedinius bequeathed them at his death (1559) to Christopher von Eusum, the grandson of the Knight Onno von Eusum, who had been one of Wessel's younger friends, and to him they still belonged in Hardenberg's days ;[1] But we have no subsequent notice of their existence. From Wessel's remains, Hardenberg had himself collected several pieces, particularly on ascetical subjects, and lent them to William Sagarus,[2] the devoted admirer of the author. They were to have been returned, but the promise to this effect was not kept. Hardenberg adds that he hears there is an attorney in Mechlin who has in his hands various miscellaneous writings of Wessel; and these may probably have been what Sagarus[3] borrowed; but neither is there any further trace of them. The Mare Magnum, or at least a considerable portion of it, was preserved for a while in the monastery of Mount St. Agnes. At the time, however, of Hardenberg's visit to the spot, it had been sent to some men of learning in Brabant or Zealand, so that he saw nothing of it,[4] and there are no further intimations of its existence. The Dutch scholar, Martin Schoock,[5] possessed several of Wessel's letters, and promised to give them to the public, but unfortunately the promise was never executed. The Englishman, Wharton,[6] notices a work by Wessel, *de Justificatione per Christum.* The

[1] See *Hardenberg's* Biography, p. 11.

[2] See supra. p. 577.

[3] *Hardenberg's* Biography, p. 16 and 17.

[4] Ibid. p. 3.

[5] See *Muurling*, p. 76 and 120.

[6] In Append. ad Cav. Hist. Liter. p. 192. Perhaps he trusted to *Sweertius* Athen. Belg. p. 699. The catalogue, however, of Wessel's works given by Sweertius is by no means faultlessly correct. He quotes, for example, p. 700, a separate work *de Fraternitatibus*, which is merely part of one of the treatises in the Farrago.

notice, however, may probably be founded on mistake,[1] just as the work of which he speaks under the title of de audienda Missa, is nothing else but that de Sacramento Eucharistiae et audienda Missa.

B. *The Works which have survived, or at least have appeared in print, are as follows :—*

1. Tractatus de Oratione, cum luculentissima Dominicae orationis explanatione. Libr. xi. Opp. edit. Groning. p. 1—192.
2. Tractatus de cohibendis cogitationibus et de modo constituendarum meditationum, qui Scala Meditationis vocatur. Libr. iv. Opp. p. 194—326.
3. Exempla Scalae Meditationis, Fratribus montis divae Agnetis dedicata. Exempl. i. ii. iii. Opp. p. 327—408.
4. De Causis Incarnationis et de Magnitudine Dominicae Passionis, Libri. ii. Opp. p. 457—643.
5. De Sacramento Eucharistiae. Opp. p. 650—705.
6. Farrago Rerum Theologicarum (Opp. p. 711—851), in qua tractatur.
   a. De benignissima Dei providentia.
   b. De causis, mysteriis et effectibus Dominicae incarnationis et passionis.
   c. De dignitate et potestate ecclesiastica. De vera obedientia. Et quantum obligent mandata et statuta Praelatorum.
   d. De sacramento poenitentiae, et quae sint claves Ecclesiae. De potestate ligandi et solvendi.
   e. Quae sit vera communio sanctorum. De thesauro Ecclesiae. De participatione et dispensatione hujus thesauri. De Fraternitatibus.
   f. De purgatorio : quis et qualis sit ignis purgatorius. De statu et profectu animarum post hanc vitam.
7. Wesseli Epistolae, in quibus praesertim de purgatorio et indulgentiis. Opp. p. 853—921.

[1] *Muurling*, who expatiates upon all the foregoing matters, supposes the same, p. 117—120.

All these works have been mentioned and their substantial contents characterised at the proper place in our sketch of the author's theology, so that we have nothing here to add. On the other hand, we must give a fuller account of the editions of Wessel's works.

3. THE EDITIONS OF THE WORKS OF WESSEL.

In the first instance several treatises and letters were printed separately, after which a more complete edition of his writings was set on foot. The occasion which led to this first publication is related by Hardenberg.[1] Cornelius Honius, and several other pious men, discovered among the papers of Hoeck, dean of Naeldwick, a treatise upon the Lord's Supper, which they believed to proceed from the pen of Wessel. At the same time they became possessed of several other of his works, found partly among the books of Hoeck, and partly in the Monastery on Mount St Agnes. With these writings, they despatched Henry Rhodius to Luther, then at Wittemberg, whose sentiments were at the time sufficiently well known, and of whom they might hope, that he would affectionately receive and propagate Wessel's productions; and their expectation was fulfilled. Luther and his friends took measures for their publication, and in the years 1522 and 1523, several editions of the Farrago rerum theologicarum followed each other in rapid succession, clearly showing that the works were then highly esteemed and much read by the friends of the Reformation, particularly in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland; a fact which in its turn satisfactorily explains why the Tridentine fathers thought it necessary to insert them among the Libros prohibitos primae classis.[2]

1 Biography of Wessel, p. 13. See supra p. 508—9.

2 Valer. *Andreas* Biblioth. Belg. p. 849. *Sweertius* Athen. Belg. p. 699. *Wharton* in Append. ad Cav. Hist. Lit. p. 192. Index Libr. prohibit. Antv. 1570, 8, p. 51. In many places, where it might have been expected, no mention is made of the prohibition of Wessel's writings. *Vergerius* upbraids Casa for not inserting Wessel in the catalogue of prohibited authors. *Schelhorns* Ergötzlichkeiten ii. 17. In the Index Auctorum et librorum, qui ab officio S. Rom. et universalis Inquisi-

There is some diversity of opinion respecting the first impression of the Farrago. Several scholars[1] speak of one which, as they say, appeared so early as 1521, under the direction of Luther at Wittemberg. Others, as Fabricius and Pfeiffer,[2] consider that edition to have been the earliest which appeared at Wittemberg in 1522 preceded by the Epistola Johannis Bergellani ad Andream Palaeosphyram, appealing in particular to a passage in the letter which says, scripta Wesseli in hunc usque diem intercepta fuisse. Others again, as *e. g.*, Mansi,[4] Bauer,[5] and Muurling,[6] are of opinion that a quarto edition, which is without note of place or date, and is unaccompanied by either the letter of Luther or Bergellanus, is the most ancient, and that after it, that which Bergellanus' letter introduced, made its appearance as the second in 1522. This view I am also constrained to adopt so far as my conviction rests upon personal inspection. There are now before me *five* editions of the Farrago, all belonging to the *Library* at *Goettingen*, and which, in respect of age, require to be arranged as follows:

1. The oldest edition is the one without note of time or place (although in all probability that was Heidelberg). It is in form a longish quarto, and, exclusive of the title and table of contents, consists of 98 leaves. The title runs:

FARRAGO
WESSELI
M. WESSELI Groningeñ. LVX MVNDI
olim vulgo dicti, rarae et reconditae doctrinae,
Notulae aliquot et Propositiones,
quarum series et materia
latius versa pagina
conspicitur.

tionis caveri mandantur, Bologna per Ant. Giacarello et Pelegrino Bonardo, o. J. 8, mention is made not of Wessel, but of John of Wesel.

[1] *Ypei* en *Dermout* Gesch. der Ned. Herv. Kerk. i. Aant. 46.

[2] *Fabr.* Bibl. med. et inf. Lat. iv. p. 493. Pfeiffer Beiträge zur Kenntniss alter Bücher und Handschr. St. 1, s. 487.

[3] It is printed in the Groeningen edition, p. 851 and 852.

[4] In Fabric. Biblioth. l. c.

[5] Biblioth. libr. rariorum universal. T. iv. p. 296.

[6] Comment. de Wesselo p. 126 sqq.

Immediately after which, and still on the same page, follow the general contents of the Farrago, or the particular treatises it includes, and at the foot the words:

Decessit ex hac luce M. Wesselus An. M. CCCC. LXXXIX in die sancti Francisci. Sepultus Groningae in monasterio quod dicitur Spūalium virginum.

On the back of the page commences the special table of contents; after which come the Treatises themselves, and at the conclusion of the Book there stands:

ΤΕΛΟΖ

Quod timet impius, veniet super eum,
desyderiū suū justis dabitur. Prouer. X.

That this edition is the most ancient, might be inferred with probability from the imperfection of the typography, and in general its whole character; especially, however, from the personal particulars stated in the title respecting Wessel, which shew that he is introduced to the public as a new, and hitherto quite unknown author, and likewise from the following epigram which stands on fol. 1.

Huc pie lector ades, *nova* jam documenta videbis.
Quae tam doctrina quam pietate valent.
Scripserat haec etenim Doctor clarissimus olim
Wesselus. Phrisii gloria magna soli.
Sed *latuere diu*, variis erroribus ortis
Causa, Sophistarum pestis iniqua fuit etc.

At the same time, these criteria are not quite decisive. The most certain is, that this edition does not as yet contain several, though not very important, pieces which are introduced into that of 1522.

2. The second edition is the one which is introduced by the letter of Joh. Arnoldus Bergellanus (John Arnold of Bergel) to Andrew Palaeosphyra. This letter is dated an. 1522. And at the end of the book there stands: Excusum Wittembergae. On

the title, which is ornamented with marginal woodcuts, besides the words : FARRAGO RERVM THEOLOGICARVM, VBERRIMA, DOCTISSIMO VIRO WESSELO GRONINGENSI AVTORE, there is also a list of the six treatises. Upon the back of the page appears the letter of Bergellanus, followed by a specific table of contents; and the treatises themselves upon 85½ leaves. The quarto form of this edition is not so long as that of the former. The typography much better, and at the end there is even a table of some of the errata. The contents are upon the whole the same. At least this edition has all that is in the former with something more, to wit, not merely the letter of Bergellanus, but likewise 10 *Propositiones* by the author, which is decisive of its posteriority.

3. The third edition, likewise in quarto, and arranged like the former one, but printed more fully and diffusely, so that the Farrago occupies 127½ leaves, appeared, as is said at the end: Basileae, apud Adamum Petri, Anno MDXXII. Mense Septembri. It differs essentially from the others in having the preface of Luther on the very first leaf, dated Wittenbergae 3. Calendas Augusti,[1] and among the treatises of Wessel a Nro.

[1] This epistle of Luther, which forms a kind of charter in the history of Wessel, deserves a place here. It runs as follows :

Christiano lectori Martinus Lutherus s.

Elias Thesbites propheta olim, cum sermo domini esset pretiosus, nec abundaret visio, occisis universis pene Prophetis ab impiissima Jesabele, arbitrabatur, sese relictum esse solum. Ob id vitae pertaesus optabat animam suam tolli, quod unus impar sibi videretur ferendo oneri intolerabili impiissimi populi et principum ejus, nescius adhuc septem millia domino relicta, et Abdiam cum centum Prophetis latitantibus servatum. Quae parabola, si parvis liceat componere magna, hujus mei seculi esse videtur. Ego enim nescio, qua Dei providentia in publicum raptus cum monstris istis indulgentiarum et pontificiarum legum et falso nominatae theologiae sic pugnavi, ut me solum esse putarem. Et si satis mihi semper fuerit animi, ita ut passim mordatior et immodestior accuser prae nimia, qua ardebam, fiducia, semper tamen id optavi, quo tollerer et ego de medio meorum Baalitarum, et civiliter mortuus in angulo mihi viverem, prorsus desperans me posse quicquam promovere apud aereas istas frontes et cervices ferreas impietatis. Sed ecce et mihi dicitur, esse domino reliquias suas salvas etiam in hoc tempore, et Prophetas in abscondito servatos. Nec hoc solum dicitur, sed et cum gaudio ostenditur. Prodiit en Vuesselus (quem Basilium dicunt) Phrisius Groningen. vir admirabilis ingenii, rari et magni spiritus, quem et ipsum apparet esse vere Theodidactum, quales pro-

VII. De eisdem fere rebus, ejusdem eruditae aliquot epistolae which occupies the space fol. 99—127, and relates in particular to Indulgences and Purgatory. The most remarkable among them is the well-known letter to Hoeck *de Indulgentiis*. There is also a letter of the publisher Adam Petri to D. Conrad Faber, in Kuesnacht, annexed at the end and containing an enthusiastic panegyric on Wessel's theology.

4. The fourth edition, Basil. ap. Ad. Petri, Anno MDXXIII. Mense Januario, likewise containing 127½ leaves in quarto, is a repetition of the third. We read upon the title: Multo, quam in priore aeditione, emendatior; so far as I have compared the two editions, although the arrangement of the type is the same, and the number of pages equal, various alterations have been made, although these are not always real improvements. At any rate it appears from an attentive comparison of the two that the latter was undoubtedly a fresh reprint.

5. The fifth edition, which I know from personal inspection, is that of Marburg, 1617, studio Theodori Strakii[1] Essendiensis, S. Theologiae Studiosi—typis Pauli Egenolphi. It contains 270 pages in quarto, and has nothing to recommend it above the

phetavit fore Christianos Jesaias, neque enim ex hominibus accepisse judicari potest, sicut nec ego. Hic si mihi antea fuisset lectus, poterat hostibus meis videri Lutherus omnia ex Vuesselo hausisse, adeo spiritus utriusque conspirat in unum. Mihi vero et gaudium et robur augescit, jamque nihil dubito, me recta docuisse, quando tam constanti sensu peneque iisdem verbis, tam diverso tempore, aliis coelo et terra alioque casu, sic ille mihi per omnia consentit. Miror autem, quae infelicitas obstiterit, quominus in publico Christianissimus hic autor versetur, nisi in caussa fuerit, quod sine bello et sanguine vixerit, qua una re mihi dissimilis est, aut metus Judaeorum nostrorum eum oppresserit, qui suis impiis inquisitionibus in hoc nati videntur, ut optimos quosque libros faciant hereticos, quo suos Aristotelicos et plus quam hereticos nobis statuant Christianos, quorum finis Deo vindice jam desinit in confusionem. Legat itaque pius lector legatque cum judicio, quo maxime hic praestat, quod et egregie formet, et quos in me offendit nimia asperitas, in aliis nimia dictionis elegantia, hic non habent, quod querantur. Stilus est trivialis ac pro seculo suo; res ipsa tractatur modeste et fideliter. Et si in stercoribus Ennii legit aurum Vergilius, poterit et ex Vuesselo nostro legere, quod opibus eloquentiæ suae addat Theologus. Dominus Jesus addat ad hunc multos alios Basilios.

Vale christiane frater.

Vuittenbergae 3. Calendas Augusti.

[1] Not Starkii, as it is spelled by *Muurling*, p. 128.

others, especially those of Basle, except a table of contents. In common with all the editions of the Farrago, it is disfigured by a multitude of errata.

Besides these five, mention is made of various other impressions of the Farrago,[1] of which I can give no certain information. Wharton[2] speaks of an edition in folio at Basle, 1523, and of another in quarto, 1525, cura Lutheri. Bayle[3] tells us of one at Leipsic with Luther's preface, of the year 1523. These statements, however, I must leave to rest upon their own weight, but they excite doubts in my mind.

In the meanwhile Rhodius and other friends of Wessel had taken measures that other productions of his pen, not contained in the Farrago, should also see the light, especially the Books de Causis incarnationis et de magnitudine dominicae passionis and de Oratione dominica.[4] As his works continued to excite great interest, a proposal to publish a complete edition of them could now be entertained, and was actually set on foot by a native of Groeningen, Peter Pappus of Tratzberg, with the title: M. *Wesseli Gansfortii Groningensis*, rarae et reconditae doctrinae uiri, qui olim *Lux Mundi* vulgo dictus fuit, *Opera*, quae inveniri potuerunt, omnia: partim ex antiquis editionibus, partim ex manuscriptis eruta. Groningae, excudebat Joannes Sassius Typographus. Anno. MDCXIV. 921 pages in quarto. This edition contains all the works of Wessel still extant, and in particular the hitherto unpublished Scala Meditationis, from a manuscript belonging to Joachim Alting, a burgomaster of Groeningen, as well as the accounts of the author's life, by Herdenberg and others, which form the introduction. From this, as the principal edition, I have made my citations. Not merely is it the principal edition, but, if carefully examined, will be found to be the

[1] The letters contained in the Farrago were also printed separately.

[2] Append. ad Cav. Hist. lit. p. 192. He is followed by *Oudinus* de Script. eccles. T. iii. p. 2713.

[3] Diction. hist. crit. s. v. Wesselus.

[4] *Hardenberg* relates in the life of Wessel, p. 11: Extat Swollis impressum volumen Wesseli, duobus libris distinctum, de Causis incarnationis, de Magnitudine dominicae passionis. Item justum volumen super Orationem dominicam. With which comp. p. 14. The first work seems also to have appeared at Antwerp in octavo, on 22 leaves. *Gesneri* Bibliotheca univers. T. i. p. 628.

only complete edition. Another pretending to have appeared in the same year, 1614, at Arnheim,[1] is of doubtful existence, and probably identical with that of Groeningen, the name of a bookseller of Arnheim having merely been printed upon the title of some of the copies.[2] A third complete edition dated Amsterdam 1617, cura Joannis M. F. Lydii Francofurtensis, under the title: *Aura Purior*, hoc est: M. Wesseli Gansfortii—Opera omnia—is, according to all appearances nothing but that of Groeningen, of which Lydius or the bookseller, had procured a number of copies and prefixed to them a new title and preface with Jacobi de Paradyso Carthusiani, M. Wesseli coaetanei, Tractatus aliquot.[3] That there was not even a fresh setting of the types, as in the editions of the Farrago at Basle, is demonstrated by the identity of the errata.[4] It appears, then, to be highly probable, that there is but one full edition[5] of Wessel's works, namely, that published at Groeningen in 1614.

4. AUTHORS WHO SPEAK OF WESSEL.

It is not necessary to mention the general works on the history of the Church and literature which incidentally allude to him.[6] We confine ourselves to the authors who either serve

[1] It is mentioned by Valerius *Andreas* Biblioth. Belg. p. 849. See *Muurling* s. 129.

[2] As *Bayle* conjectures.

[3] They occupy the first 62 pages.

[4] See *Muurling*, who has instituted a minute comparison of the two, p. 130.

[5] Some treatises by Wessel: Tractatus de dignitate et potestate ecclesiastica—Propositiones de potestate papae et ecclesiae—Responsio de Potestate papae et materia indulgentiarum—are also printed in *Goldast* Monarchia T. i. p. 563—88.

[6] The following are the authors who specially refer to him in this way: *Flacius* Catalog. Test. Verit. Lib. xix. T. ii. p. 885. edit. 1597, p. 1908. edit. 1608. Mich. *Neander* in Praef. ad. Erotem. Ling. Gr. ed. Basil. 1565. p. 310. *Adami* Vitae Philos. edit. Francof. 1705, p. 10. Valer. *Andreae* Biblioth. Belg. 1623. s. v. Wesselus. *Foppens* Biblioth. Belg. s. v. Wesselus. Ludov. *Guicciardini* Descript. Belgii p. 270. Melch. *Goldast* in Praelud. ad Tom. i. Monarch. S. Rom. Imp. edit. 1612. *Gerdes* Hist. Reform. T. iii. p. 10. *Seckendorf* Com-

as the original sources of information respecting the circumstances of his life, or who at a later period wrote special biographies of him.

The scattered notices by contemporaries have been adverted to in the Biography at their proper places. The first who after his death wrote a detailed account of his life, was *Regner Praedinius*.[1] Reverencing Wessel, he took pains to gather information respecting him from older men who had enjoyed his society. His work, however, has unfortunately been lost, and the fate of it is all the more to be deplored, that, as the author avers, he had admitted into it only the particulars whose certainty he had examined, and none that were merely ornamental.[2] The oldest surviving biography of Wessel proceeds from another of his admirers, namely *Albert Hardenberg*. This person, himself a distinguished man, has acquired, in the history of the evangelical Church of Lower Saxony, and particularly of Bremen, a celebrity connected with many sorrows. His proper name was Albert Rizaeus;[3] but from the town of Hardenberg, in the pro-

mentar. de Lutheran. Lib. i. sect. 54. §. 133. p. 226. sqq. Franc. *Sweertius* Athenae Belgicae s. v. Wesselus. p. 699. ed. 1628. *Hottinger* Hist. Eccles. sec. xvi. p. 11. *Alting* Hist. Eccles. Palat. p. 132. *Struvens* Pfälz. K. Hist. p. 2—4. *Andreae* Commentat. de quibusdam eruditor. luminibus Palatinatum et Belgium quondam illustrantibus p. 10 sqq. Idem in adnotat. ad Riesmannum rediviv. p. 66 sqq. *Saxii* Onomast. lit. p. ii. p. 431. *Bayle* Diction. hist. et crit. s. v. Wesselus T. iv. p. 2868, edit. 1720, p. 494, ed. 1740. *Brucker* Hist. Philos. T. iv. Pars i. p. 360. *Oudinus* de Script. eccles. T. iii. p. 2707. Henr. *Wharton* in Append. ad Cav. Hist lit. T. ii. p. 191. *Fabricii* Biblioth. med. et inf. Lat. T. iv. p. 168, al. 491. *Brandt* Hist. Reform. p. 53—55. *Semler* Versuch eines fruchtbaren Auszugs der K. Gesch. ii., 106—12. *Hambergers* zuverlässige Nachrichten von den vornehmsten Schriftstellern. Th. 4. s. 818—822, und im Auzuge Abtheil. 2, s. 1876—77. *Schröckh's* K. Gesch. Th. 33, s. 278—295, and succinctly K. Gesch. nach der Reformat. Th. 1, s. 101, Th., 2, s. 353. *Erhard* Gesch. des Wiederaufbl. Th. 1, s. 333. *Gieseler* K. E. ii. 4, s. 492.

[1] Respecting him compare what has been said supra p. 354 and p. 584.

[2] Regner. *Praed.* Opp. p. 198.

[3] *Gerdes* Historia motuum ecclesiast. in civitate Bremensi tempore Alb. Hardenbergii suscitatorum. Gron. 1756, p. 86 sqq. Biblioth. Bremens. Cl. v. p. 124, Cl. vi. p. 114, Cl. vii. p. 314. Some future historian of *Hardenberg's* life and conflicts will find a rich manuscript collection of Hardenbergiana in the codex of the Munich Library 351, A.

vince of Oberyssel, where he was born in 1510, consequently, somewhat more than twenty years after Wessel's death, he took his usual name of Hardenberg. The friend of Regner Praedinius, he had in early life enjoyed with him the instructions of Goswin von Halen, who no doubt imbued the two youths with reverence for Wessel and his theology. Subsequently he passed several years in the Monastery at Adwerd, where so many of Wessel's friends and scholars lived, and while there, visited the localities in which Wessel himself had for longer or shorter periods resided. That Hardenberg was a distinguished theologian and clergyman, appears from the fact of his having been called in 1547 to be preacher in the cathedral at Bremen. Here he won universal respect, and enjoyed, in an extraordinary measure, the love and applause of the citizens. Being, however, the friend of Melancthon and his doctrines, he became the object of complaint and persecution to the strict Lutherans, who, in 1561, at last succeeded in compelling him to leave the town.[1] His friend and protector, Christopher, Count of Oldenburg, gave him an asylum, and retained him near his person for four years at Rastede. He then, in 1565, became preacher at Sengwarden, in East Friesland, and two years afterwards, at Emden, where, in 1574, he died. His biography of Wessel was written in the later period of his life,[2] probably during the lei-

163, Collectio Camerariana T. 1, which is mostly filled with works either from his pen, or of which he is the subject.

[1] The history of this contest, which is one of the interludes to the great sacramental war, is told with his usual accuracy by *Planck* in his Geschichte des protest. Lehrbegriffs B. 5. Th. 2. s. 138—294. There the relative documents and writings are quoted at p. 138 and 139 annot. 191. Among the older narratives of it the best is: Dr. Alb. Hardenbergs im Dom zu Bremen geführtes Lehramt und dessen nächste Folgen (von Elard Wagner, reform. Prediger in Bremen). Bremen 1779.

[2] Not only does he speak at p. 11 of the death of Regner Praedinius († 1559), but he alludes also, p. 12, to his own conflicts in Bremen: Controversia circa Eucharistiam . . . me quoque circulo Saxonico proscripsit; cum alioqui jam pridem, relictis patria et rebus omnibus nudus nudum Christum sequutus essem, liberatus paulo ante ex Lovaniensi mea captivitate, quam periculosissimam propter Evangelium crucis perpessus fueram: non tamen conferendam quocunque modo cum calamitatibus, quibus ad totum septennium Concionatores quidam Bremenses et alii Saxonici excarnificaverunt me tantum non ad mortem ipsam.

sure he enjoyed at Rastede. This would account for several particulars having escaped from his memory, and for certain errors in his narrative, which oblige us to read it with critical attention, and weigh his statements by their intrinsic probability. But as he collected so much from the lips of contemporaries of Wessel, who were still alive, the materials which he furnishes for his history are excellent, available, and worthy of all gratitude. Indeed, the only thing to be lamented are the blanks in his narrative.[1] *Gerhard Geldenhauer* follows Hardenberg as biographer of Wessel. His Vita Wesseli Gansfortii Frisii[2] is, indeed, too brief to be important, for it contains only 1½ quarto pages, and is not free from unfounded statements. It has, however, preserved a few characteristical anecdotes recommended by their intrinsic credibility. These are the writers whose works, as in a manner contemporaneous, may be regarded as original sources.

The subsequent authors whom we have to mention are the Frisian historians, *Suffridus Petri* and *Ubbo* Emmius. The first, in his Book on the authors of Friesland,[3] gives a short biography of Wessel which has no errors, but at the same time no particular merits, and keeps to mere generalities. The second, in his History of Frisian affairs,[4] furnishes a few notices of which we

[1] The Vita Wesseli Groning. conscripta ab Alberto *Hardenbergio*, S. Theol. Doctore, sed mutila—was first printed at the beginning of the Groeningen edition of Wessel's works, and occupies twenty-two quarto pages. In some places we find: Desunt nonnulla. *Muurling* supposes that Hardenberg's complete manuscript might still be found in the city library of Emden, to which the author bequeathed his books. Comment. de Wess. p. 98. I have before me a printed catalogue of that library (Emden 1836), where there is no notice of it. On the other hand the Codex Monacensis 351, A. 163, which we have so often quoted, contains the *Wesseliana* of *Hardenberg*, either in his original handwriting, or in a very old transcript of it unquestionably of the 16th century. Here, too, it is said at the conclusion of the Vita Wesseli: desunt aliqua. At the same time, the manuscript contains some particulars especially respecting Wessel's intercourse with Thomas a Kempis, which are not in the printed copy, but which I have introduced at the proper places in the life.

[2] Printed ex primo libro illustrium virorum inferioris Germaniae in front of the Groeningen edition p. 22 and 23.

[3] De Scriptoribus Frisiae, Decades XVI. Franec. 1599. Dec. viii. Cap. iv. p. 77—80.

[4] Rerum Frisiacarum Historia. 1616.

have occasionally made use in our sketch. An excellent and circumstantial account, judiciously compiled, of all the known facts of Wessel's life, is to be found in the work called Portraits and Biographies of the Professors of Groeningen;[1] it contains also his likeness. This biography is next to Hardenberg's, the most full, and, among the oldest, the best.

In more modern times, Wessel has been the subject of separate learned disquisitions. More than a hundred years ago, Dr George Henry Goez, Superintendent at Lubeck, wrote a special *Commentatio*[2] respecting him. The little work, however, is of no consequence.[3] Its sole merit consists in the well-intended attempt to revive the memory of a distinguished man. The contents are of little value. The matter is borrowed from the older narratives, and not elaborated either with critical skill or in a good style. Little or nothing is said of Wessel's theological importance, of the spirit and contents of his works, of his intercourse with contemporaries, or of his relation retrospectively to Scholasticism or prospectively to the Reformation.

Of quite another kind is the most recent work by a Dutch scholar, Dr William Muurling,[4] who has raised to his celebrated countryman a monument not unworthy of his fame. It treats chiefly of Wessel's life, and gives a good and luminous account of it, enriched with beautiful literary references. In a first historical effort, we must not blame the author for having adhered closely to his theme, and paid less attention to the general cir-

[1] Effigies et Vitae Professorum Academiae Groningae et Omlandiae. Gron. 1654 in small folio. The life of Wessel occupies p. 12—27. For the rest, the author is not, as is frequently supposed, Ubbo Emmius. See *Muurling* p. 31.

[2] G. H. *Goezii* Commentatio historico—theologica de *Joanne Wesselo*, quam die xxx. Novemb. A. MDCCXIX defendit *Joannes Wessel*, Lubecensis, vocatus Symmysta Travemundanus. Lubecae 1719, 36, s. in 4. G. H. Goez wrote several works of the same kind, as may be seen from *Fabricii* Centifol. Luth. under his name.

[3] I owed to the courtesy of the late *Beesenmeyer* an inspection of the Commentatio. The most remarkable thing about it is its having been defended by a John Wessel.

[4] Commentatio historico-theologica de *Wesseli Gansfortii* cum vita tum meritis in praeparanda sacrorum emendatione in Belgio septentrionali. Auctore Guil. *Muurling*, cum summos in Theologia honores consequeretur. Pars prior. Traj. ad Rhen. 1831, xii. and 131 pages in 8.

cumstances of the 16th century, especially as he has successfully executed what was his immediate task. He has now supplemented his *Commentation* by an academical Discourse, upon Wessel as a genuine theologian whose example is still worthy of imitation.[1]

[1] Orat. de Wesseli Gansfortii, germani Theologi, principiis atque virt. etc. Amstel. 1840. This discourse was delivered at the opening of a theological professorship in Wessel's native town.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

It still remains to condense the substance of the foregoing work into a general picture, and bring more distinctly into view the inferences respecting the Reformation, to which, in many instances, only allusion was made.[1]

Let us first see what was the state of matters which the forerunners of the Reformation found in the Church, and what was the opposite for which they strove. We shall thus discover in how far they were in the right, and in what way their object required to be realised.

Religion, and what alone the name then imported, Christianity, had in the middle ages once more become exclusively a doctrine and commandment, in other words, a compendium of statutes respecting God, eternal life, and the means of attaining to them. This shewed itself in a twofold way; on the one side, and as regards the life of the people, Christianity was conceived in a more or less Pelagian style, and delivered in the form of a divinely authorised law of life, a method of moral and religious discipline, a finished system of rules and directions for serving God, and by obedience to which it was the duty of man, either in the strict sense of the word to *merit*, or at least, with the Divine aid, to earn salvation. On the other side, but still in connection with this, Christianity, in the sphere of the school and speculation, had become an artificial complication of abstract definitions respecting divine things—a half-understood and half-misunderstood metaphysics of the deepest mysteries, which proceeded from positive law, pretended

[1] Compare here the detailed remarks of the two learned and worthy Dutch ecclesiastical historians *Royaard* and *Kist*, in the first part of the new series of their Archives of Ecclesiastical history: Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerk. Geschiedenis. Eerste Deel, 1840, p. 1—264.

to give, and in its own way actually gave, a ready answer to all questions, suggesting themselves to the youthful curiosity, about God and the world, visible and invisible things, attempted chiefly to gratify the thirst for knowledge and the interests of theory, and set up the dogmatic formula, in which this was done, as a condition of salvation equally with the moral-law of life; so that all religion was made to consist in squaring faith and action according to certain fixed and prescribed types, otherewise there could be no salvation in time or eternity. In both of these spheres, which in common treated Christianity as a statute, the consciousness had become extinct, that according to its primitive nature, Christianity was essentially a religion, and in fact a religion of free love to God, and as is the offspring of that, of equally free love to man,—that is to say, the religion of a love which does not wait until it is commanded to do good, but does it without being commanded, and from an inward instinct, demonstrating itself by this very circumstance to be a power of God for the regeneration and sanctification of the heart—a principle destined, from its own invisible depths, to transform the whole life of individuals and nations,—in fact a new and divine spirit of life. Christianity, having thus come to be regarded in the light of a statute and scholastic formula, was as a necessary consequence, taken under the protection of that power which guided the whole affairs of the European nations, and constituted during the middle ages the centre of their social progress—we mean the Church. The Church administered Christianity as a law, and watched over it as speculation; and all more important movements of the Christian spirit were, or at least ought to have been, enclosed within its barriers. The Church of the middle ages itself, however, was no longer an organism aspiring to be the ideal of a community of brothers, essentially animated from within, and moved in all its members by a free self-determination; no longer was the ultimate and supreme regulator by which it was governed, the Christian spirit, that is the Spirit of its invisible but everpresent Head. On the contrary, the Church was now a commonwealth, of a noble kind indeed, but confined by very tight bands, modelled in all respects like the State, and whose proper substance and true power and importance consisted in its Priests, a Body equally numerous, well arranged, and provided with

the richest means of spiritual influence, property, and dominion. In fact it was essentially a Hierarchy or Hierarchial state. The priesthood, or spiritual aristocracy, had interposed with a claim of divinely ordained power and authority, between God and the people, between the Church and its true Head, between grace and the communications of it to the individual. It had asserted its right to be the exclusive expounder of revelation, the guardian of tradition, and the dispenser of all higher blessings. Out of the Church there was no salvation, and apart from the priesthood, no Church. A hierarchy, however, of power so intensive and of so immeasurable extent, could not subsist without a strong central point to hold it together. To such a Church therefore the Papacy was indispensable; and had it not spontaneously originated and grown up in it and along with it, would have required to be invented. It was natural that all the power and dignity, all the blessings and curses of the Church, should concentrate themselves in the Papacy; and if the priesthood was the proper essence of the Church, the Pope was equally the essence of the priesthood, the great Pontiff, the universal Bishop, the representative and fountain of all episcopal authority and influence, the centre including the Church's very nature and the fountain from which it perpetually emanates.

In this way, far removed from the idea of a free community of brethren, such as the period of its first love had realised, the Church had become a real visible kingdom, seeking by all expedients, both material and spiritual, not merely to secure its existence, but to reduce all else beneath its sway. No doubt it continued to act the part of instructress, but it soon became likewise a queen. Christianity, which it employed as a law for tuition, was changed also into an instrument for subjecting whatever attempted to assert exemption from its orders; and the more subjective liberty and independence were evinced by particular individuals or parties, in either assailing or threatening it, the more did the secularised Church feel itself compelled by the instinct of self-preservation to resist them with unrelenting and bloody severity. If to this we add, what could not but ensue, seeing that the Supreme governor of the Church and his organs were human beings, viz., a self-exaltation transcending the limits of nature, and commingling all spiritual

and temporal, divine and human things, an inward moral corruption, both of the highest ecclesiastical power, and of its numerous instruments ramified among all the ranks of the people; if we add, what was likewise inevitable, inasmuch as in the same sphere, one power only, and not two, could really exist and reign, a tendency on the part of the Ecclesiastical, to subject and even absorb the Civil state; if we farther add, what is universally the accompaniment of the hierarchy, when it does not hold its ideal objects purely and steadily in view and keep pace with advancing civilization, a misapplication of the highest and best things, viz., the faith and devotion of the nations, to secular and external objects, and an endeavour to retain the body of the Christian people in a state of spiritual minority and inaction,—we have then the worst of all possible corruptions, namely, a Church originally a free kingdom of spirit and of love, but now degenerated not merely into a kingdom of this world, but as it had lost its natural position as an instructress, and spiritual superiority, into a tyranny contrary to nature, and which could only be artificially upheld. And such in fact, in spite of all the good and salutary energies which it still harboured in its bosom, was the position of the Church towards the end of the middle ages. It was a mixed temporal and spiritual universal monarchy, great and mighty by the traditions of the past, but insufficient for the present, and without life or vigour for the future, obstructive to civil society when endeavouring to develope the independence belonging to it by nature and divine right, oppressive to the spirit when it attempted to tread the paths which its inward instincts pointed out, indulgent to any sinner willing to pay it with obedience, service, or money; but inexorably severe even to the most pious who disturbed it in the sleep of its spiritual and temporal possession, a schoolmistress to the nations without being a pattern, and always on the watch to derive advantages from them, but without giving them any of a higher and spiritual kind in return. That the Church was really what we have now described, especially during the 14th and 15th centuries, is proved by the testimony not merely of its adversaries, but of its most faithful and zealous sons, nay, by the unanswerable evidence of facts.

What, on the other hand, in the face of this state of matters, did the forerunners of the Reformation propose? Irrespective

of the peculiar aims of this or of that individual among them, their common object was essentially as follows.

Christianity, they were persuaded, ought no longer to be treated as an external ordinance and formula, as a statutory law of the Church, or as a fixed and inalterable system of scholastic metaphysics; but, in the way in which they had themselves learned to see it, ought to be once more generally and clearly recognised as a free Gospel, an inward spirit of life, a power of God for redemption and atonement, an inexhaustible fountain of sanctification through love and childlike gratitude; which no doubt manifested itself, consonantly to its nature, as a moral law and a doctrine, but which was at the sametime a law of spontaneous attachment animated by a higher spirit, and a doctrine propounding not merely a traditional form of words, but a Spirit evidenced in the consciousness and experience. For this reason, they opposed to the secularised ecclesiasticism, which had assumed a legal form and was at the same time tainted with Pelagian error, the vital internalism of evangelical sentiment, the principle of faith and love, and liberty having its root in both; and they no less confronted with the speculation of the schools, now displaced from its original foundations and stiffened by tradition, the simple and sound doctrine of the Scriptures, regenerated in profound personal experience. No doubt, in exalting and establishing the Scriptural principle, they became one-sided and exclusive, which the force of antagonism rendered almost unavoidable; still they gave a most vigorous and undoubtedly beneficial impulse to the reinstalment of the word of God and its purer contents which tradition and the Scholastic theology had long and unduly driven from their place; while at the same time it is undeniable that in doing so, their attention was directed not exclusively to the external words and letter of Scripture, however highly they esteemed both, but to the vital spirit which could be elicited from them. In fact what they sought for in the Scriptures was not a new form of Scholasticism, rendered somewhat more pure and simple, but fresh spiritual nourishment, an overflow of religious and moral life, and the powers of salvation. All this, however, was to be found solely in the kernel of the Word, *i.e.*, in the person and work of the Redeemer; and clearly and victoriously to set these forth, or, in other words, to exhibit Christ as the personified power of Divine truth,

holiness, and love, as the being who is our wisdom and redemption, as the living head and only sovereign of the Church, and to make all else subject to this divine and spiritual power, was manifestly the central point of all their efforts. Christ should once more dwell with life and power among his people. He, and not the Pope or any other human authority, should again bear rule in the Church. This object, however, was inseparably connected with another, which equally characterises the intellectual tendency of these men. Christ can only be embraced as a real Saviour where sin is recognised and felt. Hence, with the preaching of the Gospel, both at its original introduction and in every subsequent revival, the preaching of repentance and the sharpening of the sense of sin and of the need of salvation have always gone hand in hand. For this reason, we find the forerunners of the Reformers, as well as the Reformers themselves, chiefly occupied with inculcating the doctrines relating to this point, and not fortuitously but necessarily ranged in the ranks of Augustine, who urged the sense of sin, and against Pelagianism, which obliterated it. For the same reason, also, in the positive doctrine of salvation, they founded everything upon the merits of Christ, apprehended by faith, and nothing upon the merit of works. To all of them Christ is the sole and fully sufficient fountain of salvation, the one mediator between God and man, and actually executes every function of the office. From this they proceeded to draw three inferences, which they did not fail also to maintain in controversy—namely, That there is no need for any further priestly mediation in the Church, Christ having restored a direct filial relation between the redeemed and God; that there is no need of any further legislation, inasmuch as the evangelical law which Christ has given is sufficient for all Christians; and that there is no need of any visible, supreme power in the Church, representative of Christ, as Christ has never ceased to be the Church's present and operative head. Whatever, therefore, interferes with these relations, not only impairs the honour of Christ, but likewise disturbs the purity of the connection between the Christian, emancipated by the gospel, and his God and Saviour. From this stand-point a wide field of controversy opened itself to the champions of the Reformation, against the priesthood and the Papacy, by whom Christ was forced into the shade, against extra-evangelical human statutes and human autho-

rity, against the pretended pardon of sin by man, and the sale of indulgences, and against everything connected with these abuses; and upon this field we see them one by one bravely wrestling. Inasmuch, too, as they thereby necessarily came into conflict with the power, which was supreme during the middle ages, they did not shrink from the last alternative,—that which cost even a Luther the greatest inward trouble,—namely, hostility to the Church. Recognising its manifold corruptions, nay, even apostacy, as it presented itself to their view, and yet holding fast the idea of what it ought to be, they drew a distinction between the Catholic Church and the Church of Christ, considered the former as being, what experience showed it, liable to error, but the latter, or, in other words, the Communion of saints founded upon the Gospel, as exalted above all error; and they perilled their lives in the attempt to reform the outward and visible Church, by changing not only a great part of its statutes and institutions, but its whole spiritual condition, after the model of the inward invisible Church of Christ and its foundations. In short, the object at which they aimed was the evangelical spiritualising of Christianity, bringing it back to its simple and vital foundations in Scripture, combating the ecclesiastical and scholastic ordinances which had insinuated themselves and been handed down, reviving living faith in Christ as the compendium of all salvation and blessing alike for the individual and the Church, and liberty rooted in this faith, repudiating all human things which had grown or or might grow up in the Church against the honour of God and Christ, renewing the Church into a society which, penetrated with the spirit of its founder and head, should be free from all false legality and yet under law in holy love, and converting the special priesthood into the universal, the Papacy into the government of Christ, and ecclesiasticism into evangelical Christianity. This we affirm was the main object, to which these men in common aspired, and which, as individuals, they strove, each according to the measure of his knowledge, and in his own particular way, to realise.

If we take a general view of the leading particulars, we will not hesitate, whatever our sentiments may otherwise be, to acknowledge that the actors in the Reformation aimed at a *better state of things*, such as either constitutes in general the good of

the Church, or at least did so in the existing circumstances. Whatever imperfections may have cleaved to their Christian knowledge, or faults to their lives, still, if we look to the root of the matter, they had unmistakeably upon their side the right of a more earnest, strict, and pure Christian spirit, of a more complete truth, morality, and freedom.

This right of a purer and better Christianity, however, was not a mere matter of theory. It belonged essentially to morality, and, as such, included in its very nature a practical exigency. It required to be realised; and this realisation could only take place by a remodelling,—an objective and subjective remodelling—of the general state of the Church, in other words, by a *reformation.*

Christianity is, in its inmost nature, reformatory; as is also that of which it is the highest real truth, namely, the essence of the mind of man in its inmost core, its religious life. Christianity is reformatory, not merely retrospectively, and as regards Judaism, of which it is the refinement in the purest spirit of its predictions, but in a much higher degree prospectively, in the course of its own progress through the human race. Its intent is to reform, from the very heart, the human individual and race, and to collect all who resign themselves to its influence into a community consecrated to God and undergoing a progressive purification. This community, or the kingdom of God, as it can only be realised among men, comes into conflict with the world, is unavoidably affected by it, and more or less attracts secular and sinful ingredients; whereas, on the other hand, Christianity contains an indestructible purifying virtue, which secretes all that is either alien or contrary to God; and so it cannot but happen, that when worldly matter accumulates in the visible kingdom of God or the Church, that then the purgative force of Christianity shall proportionally exert itself. Wherever this is done in a thorough and comprehensive way, there does Christianity, by its very nature, become reformation. The Christian idea re-acts and protests against its temporal manifestation. A time for reform is come. This process, exerted more vigorously at particular epochs, runs through the whole history of the Christian world, and thereby demonstrates itself to be indelibly seated in Christianity itself in its

relation to mankind. Christ himself has described his working as a process of moral secretion and sifting reaching to the heart of humanity. He came not to send peace, but a sword. He was the first and greatest reformer. In the same way have all the Teachers who influenced the general Church, been at least in some one aspect of their labours reformatory; nor is it Protestantism only, but the Papacy itself, which has its great reformers to show, as, for example, Gregory VII. And no less will this renovating process continue in all future times so long as the opposition lasts between truth and error, holiness and sin, the kingdom of God and the world. The necessity for it is situated not more in the nature of Christianity than in the constitution of the human mind, and in the position it occupies to the Christian religion and divine things in general. If even generally, and in every phase it presents, the human mind be calcuated for a historical existence, and consequently for a progressive development in voluntary and incessant action; if this development, as free, be necessarily gradual, and in virtue of the hostility it encounters from sin and error, which are the accompaniments of its freedom, can only proceed in antagonisms, conflicts, and catastrophes, the same is more especially the case with the human mind in its relation to Christianity, that is, in its religious and moral life. Christianity has not been conferred upon our race as a system or formula, consisting of a set of ready made abstract ideas. It includes, no doubt, a deep and copious fund of doctrine, a solid kernel of faith and truth, but the defining and moulding of it into fixed forms of thought has, in its turn, become a labour for the intellect of man—and it is on this very circumstance that the power of Christianity to excite the mind depends. Here, too, a process of development has opened up, whose task, assuming, as it does, different modifications at different times, is infinite. In carrying it on, owing to the indissoluble connection of practice with theory and the dependence of knowledge upon the general state of the inward life, periods of corruption and darkness occur; and did no conflict, no thorough crisis and renewal, in short, no reformation, occasionally happen, an essential ingredient, nay, what is properly the moving and impellent power in the spiritual development, would be wanting. Indeed, ir-

respective of Christianity, the general religious and moral progress of mind would stagnate and corrupt, if reformatory crises did not in all departments take place at the right time. Everywhere, under certain conditions, the evolution of the human mind and of human society becomes a reformation, which, only when violently and unnaturally repelled, is converted into revolution.

We may venture to say then, that there must be reformation, if there is to be Christianity or mind at all, or a historical development either of mind in general, or of the Christian mind in particular. It is also a fact, that towards the close of the middle ages, a heap of corrupt, injurious, and obstructive materials, had been accumulated in the Christian world, and especially in the Church; that the admission of light and air was required; and that a better spirit, which had long been ripening, could not but at last make way for itself. This, no impartial person who is acquainted with history, will deny. There can only be a question as to how the thing should to have been done? In what way should the transition from the antiquated state of matters into the fresher, purer, more Christian and more moral one, have been effected?

In general there were two ways practicable. The Reformation might have been attempted upon the existing basis of the Church, to wit, the ecclesiastical aristocracy and monarchy; or it might have been attempted in defiance of these, upon the foundation of Scripture. In the former case, it must have proceeded from an established ecclesiastical authority, such as Œcumenical synods, and been accomplished gradually and deliberately in positive legal acts; and so it would have possessed, in a higher degree, the character of legitimacy and continuous historical development. In the second case, the Reformation could only be effected by the more general progress of the collective Christian spirit under the conduct of eminent personages, with an inward vocation for the task; it required by its very nature to be of a more popular, and to a certain degree, democratic character; and an inevitable consequence was, that it should wage decided war with many established things, and, on the contrary, endeavour to introduce a new ecclesiastical Law which no doubt appeared to it to be the old and eternal one of Christianity. The first species of re-

formation affected only a part of the existing state of things. It did not cut so deep into the flesh; and keeping within the bounds of order, promised to maintain the Catholic unity of the Church. The latter struck at the root of all that was unchristian and pernicious, was of a more thorough and radical kind, and insisted upon a stricter separation of the jarring elements. But, at the same time, it broke all terms with the ruling power, and thereby threatened to produce a schism within the Church's bosom.

The former kind of reformation, which was milder and more consonant to law, was the object of desire, endeavour, and hope to the most enlightened Christian men, at the commencement and in the course, of the fifteenth century; nay, the great Councils of Constance and Basle formally constructed out of it a new principle of ecclesiastical law.[1] The utmost they had in view was, that a free, powerful, and comprehensive representation of the whole of western Christendom, deriving its plenary authority only from God and Christ, should meet in general councils and constitute the supreme legislative and judicial power in the Church; that these Councils should assemble at periodical intervals of about ten years, deliberate unrestrained on the great interests of the Church, conscientiously provide for existing exigencies, and in concurrence with the Pope, or should he obstinately resist, even in defiance of him, introduce the improvements which the times required. In this way, the principle and living organ of a reformation of a progressive nature and advancing with steady legal steps, would have been introduced into the bosom of the Church itself. Had this proposal permanently prevailed, the Church which, since the days of Gregory VII. had been an absolute and frequently despotic monarchy, would have assumed the form of a constitutional Commonwealth. In fact, the limitation of the Papacy would have been much greater than that of the kingly power in constitutional monarchies, inasmuch as in these, the consent of the kingly power is necessary for all important transactions, whereas the representative body

[1] The fullest information respecting the history and tendency of these Councils is given in the well-known work of *Wessenberg:* die grossen Kirchenversammlungen des 15ten ud 16ten Jahrhunderts. Constanz 1840. 4 Bände.

of the Church asserted for itself a title, not only to act and determine without the Papacy, but in case of necessity, even to sit in judgment upon it.

The exertions of the men by whom this was proposed, were unquestionably well-intentioned and noble. The idea itself was magnificent, and seemed to guarantee to the Church an auspicious future. In fact, even the Protestant, looking at its present shivered and fragmentary condition, may well cherish the wish, that as a bond of union to the whole European family of nations, it had remained undivided, and by its own intrinsic power, reformed itself, through a series of conflicts perhaps, but still without any disruptive catastrophe, and in historical continuity and uninterrupted progression. The reality of history, however, shews the vanity of any such wish; and a closer examination of the matter is sufficient to convince us, that the course of events could not be different from what it has actually been. The efforts of the aristocratical representative system must, from the very nature of the case, have failed to achieve their object; for they involved an inward contradiction, rested on false premises, and, even in reference to the reformatory principle itself, were not sufficiently thorough.

As we first observe, they involved a contradiction. This will be best shown by a parallel case. The Synodal tendencies are in several essential respects of a piece with the modern political theories, which find the guarantee of a free and vigorous development of social life, principally or exclusively in a body of popular representatives, placed side by side with the monarchy and acting as a restraint upon it. The constitutional system of the Catholic Church resembled these modern political constitutions; and, only went a little further, inasmuch as they assigned to the ecclesiastic representatives a decidedly higher position than can be given to the representatives of the people in a monarchy, to wit, a judicial authority in certain cases, even over the Pope, and an unlimited autocracy and supremacy in the Church. But, if upon the political domain, where, however much the divine right may theoretically be pressed, still, in the application, only human circumstances and human agencies are dealt with, the idea of monarchy is not absolutely done away by the accession of a representative check; the case is quite

different in the ecclesiastical sphere, at least, modified as it then was, and as in Catholicism, if Catholicism is to continue in force, it must ever be. According to the Catholic system, not only does the Pope at the outset owe his position to the grace of God *(jus divinum)* in an eminent sense of the word; but, in the whole course of his actings, and in all the essential decisions which he emits, he is regarded as a divine personage. His government is not merely human, and as such, subject to error; but it is theocratical, standing as it were under a continual inspiration, and therefore exalted above all fallibility and contradiction. Not merely is he a sanctified person; but he is the vicar of God, and the channel of communication for all the powers of sanctification to the Christian world. It is impossible to place at the side of an authority like this, which absolutely transcends the sphere of humanity, any restrictive power, far less to subordinate it to a higher tribunal, without changing and even destroying it in its very core. The papacy, as the visible substitute of God, only corresponds with its idea when it constitutes an absolute, unlimited, supreme authority from which there is no appeal. The Synods, however, proposed to deprive it of this fundamental character, to subject it, in certain cases, to themselves, and authorise appeals from it to a higher ecclesiastical authority; and the attempt involved an internal contradiction affecting the Church's very heart, and from which, as things then stood, a war of life and death could not but ensue. Both authorities necessarily proceeded, each on the assertion of its superiority to the other; when, in point of fact, the superiority could belong to only one of them. If the Synods gained the victory, the Papacy was annihilated in its very essence, and survived only as a form, while the Church became an aristocratic republic. If, on the contrary, the Papacy maintained itself in its ancient power and dignity, then the Synods could not possibly acquire the importance and efficiency which they claimed as indispensable for their functions; and the Church continued a pure theocratic monarchy. This contradiction was seen, and by no one either sooner or more clearly, than by that judicious and intelligent man who, on the one hand, combated the primacy of the Pope, but, on the other, denied the impracticability of a system which endeavoured to combine with it,

the primacy of Synods; we speak of Luther. He repeatedly expresses himself on the subject, in a very characteristic way. in a letter to the Elector Frederick,[1] he says: "And so it was, that at Constance they tried to reconcile contrary things; In the first place, condemning the article: *Primatus non est jure divino;* and yet decreeing that the Council is above the Pope. This, however, is heretical and erroneous, if so be that the Pope possess the supremacy *jure divino;* for then the Council would be supreme on earth, and would have a primacy above that of the Pope, though he be the proper vicar of Christ, *in plenitudine potestatis omnium:* . . . If the primacy belong to the Pope, *jure divino,* then it does not behove the Council to usurp what is above it, and depose, govern, and treat the Pope as a subject at its pleasure. For a *jus divinum* (divine right) does not admit of being either governed or changed; and if the Pope be above all Christians, and the Romish Church above all Churches, then is he certainly above the Council, for that is nothing else but all the Churches."[2] In another passage, he speaks on the subject, and brings forward its practical aspect, showing that the scheme is impracticable. "I take for granted the willingness of the Pope to admit that he is not, *jure divino,* or by God's command, supreme, and that in order to uphold the unity of Christendom against faction and heresy, it is necessary to appoint a head to which all the rest shall submit. Such a head, of course, would be chosen by men, and it would be always in their option and power to change and even to depose it, in the way the Council at Constance dealt with the Popes, when it deposed three and appointed a fourth. I make the supposition, I say, that the Pope and the throne at Rome are willing to approve and adopt such a measure, *which, however, is an impossibility;* for it would be submitting to have his whole government and status, with all his laws and records, subverted and destroyed. In short, it is a thing he cannot do. Even, however, if done, so far from helping Christianity, it would occasion far more faction than before. For, as subjection to such a head would not be founded upon a divine command, but upon men's own good pleasure, it

[1] Of the 18th August 1519, Th. 1. p. 313 and 14, in de Wette.

[2] Articles of Schmalkald, Th. 2, Art. 4.

would very soon and very easily become despicable, and at last not retain a single member. There would likewise have to be, if not always at Rome or any one place, still in some place or other, and in that Church on which God had been pleased to confer such a boon, some man competent for the office. What a roundabout and confused state of matters this would be! And therefore it is that the Church can no longer be either governed or upheld, except by all of us living under Christ as the one head, and by the bishops, who are equal in respect of office, (although certainly unequal in respect of gifts), dilligently co-operating in unity of doctrine, faith, the sacraments, prayer, and works of love; just as St Jerome describes the priests in Alexandria conjunctly and harmoniously governing the Churches, as the Apostles did at the first, and after them the bishops over the whole of Christendom, until the Pope lifted his head above them all."

The Synodal tendency rested further upon false premises. It supposed that the Papacy, although wounded in its vital nerve, nay, annihilated in its very essence, would yet have sufficient force to keep the Church united. This effect, however, was only possible so long as the Papacy was recognised as the supreme Divine power and authority upon earth. If it was to appear merely in the light of an ecclesiastical institute, side by side with other ecclesiastic institutes, and which, as being a product of the Church's own, the Church, by means of its representatives, might manage and mould at its pleasure, then, as Luther clearly saw, its whole binding force was evaporated. All unity was gone; and, no compensating advantage gained, at least in the way of guarantee, for a certain and progressive reformation according to law. In order thereto the Papacy, which still subsisted in imposing power and influence of all kinds, and all its high dignitaries, would have required to be favourably disposed towards a Reformation. This, however, was an unfounded supposition. All improvements in the Church were only wrung from them with a high hand, and even then only for a time. No sooner was the outward compulsion removed than the hierarchy soon brought everything back into the old tracks. Although theoretically attacked, the Papacy still retained the actual power in its hands, and in every case, by

force or fraud, frustrated the endeavours of the reformatory Synods. In point of fact, what results in the way of Church improvement did the great assemblies at Constance and Basle, for which all Europe was set in commotion, leave behind them? No doubt, a great memorial and deep impression upon the general mind; but by no means any permanent and effectual changes in the actual state of matters. In short, concomitantly with the Papacy, which they intended should survive, the reformation which the Councils demanded could not possibly be set on foot, at least in any effectual way. This forced itself upon the observation of Gerson, one of the chief advocates of the representative system, and perfectly cognisant of the state of matters in the Church.[1] He says, "Let us suppose that such a reformation were effected in written documents and guaranteed by formal oaths, securities, and contracts, I yet am afraid that afterwards it would not be maintained by the Pope, the Cardinals, and other prelates and servants of his court; just as Francis Petrarch says in an anonymous work, 'That with the growth of wickedness among men, grew also hatred of the truth; so that the Government is now given up to flattery and falsehood. Besides which, it is hard to discontinue old habits.'" The same, thing, though more in reference to persons, is intimated afterwards, as the result of ample experience by the Elector John Frederick, for in allusion to Melancthon's well-known statement respecting the article of Schmalkald, that for the sake of unity, the supremacy of the Pope over the evangelical party, *jure humano*, might be admitted, he writes to Luther,[2] "If, with good intentions and for the sake of peace, we leave the Pope to be master, and with power to issue his orders to us, and our bishops, ministers, and preachers, we put ourselves in great danger and hardship, because he and his successors would never rest until they have wholly extinguished and rooted us out and all our posterity."

Finally, in the third place, the scheme of representative Synods did not carry its reformatory principles a sufficient length. We Protestants, at least, would have to question whether the basis on which it was founded was purely Christian. We could not

[1] De Reformat. Ecclesiae in Concil. universal. cap. xii.
[2] Epistle of 7th Jan. 1537 in *Seckendorf* iii. 152.

but ask, "Is, then, the Papacy, which it was proposed to uphold, as an indispensable foundation, a Christian institution at all? Does the idea of the priesthood, as a separate class, and the recognition of an ecclesiastical aristocracy founded upon it, as the divinely authorized representation of the Church, correspond with the original Christian and Apostolic spirit, with the nature of the Gospel, and with the pattern of the primitive Christian Society? Has the constitution of the Church, as a commonwealth which even in its temporal manifestation is vested with infallibility, an actual foundation in Scripture, or in history, or in the nature of things? Ought we rightfully to assign to ecclesiastical tradition, that position in reference to Scripture and general faith, which on this stand-point is assumed?—These, and similar questions are, no doubt, answered in opposite ways by Catholics and Protestants. Their effectual solution would here lead us into too wide a field. Until, however, they have been answered by the Catholic party, from Scripture, the spirit and history of Christianity and other public, "clear and manifest reasons," better than has yet been the case, we have still sufficient cause to pronounce these foundations as fluctuating and insecure, and to say: If the reformation was to be a thorough one, and consonant though not perhaps in form, still in spirit and substance, to the Apostolical doctrine and primitive condition of the Church, then it ought to have taken a much longer step, and applied the critical process even to some of the things adopted as fundamentals by the Synodal system, viz., the Papacy, the privileged priesthood, the infallibility of the visible Church and its representatives, and the legislative authority of ecclasiastical tradition.

If, then, there existed an imperative necessity for reformation, and if the way proposed by the Synods was, as we have shown, insufficient, or, at least, as no one will deny, impracticable, the only alternative left, was a reformation upon the basis of Scripture, and by the introduction and spread of a purer Christian spirit, which would gradually gain the ascendancy, and concentrating itself at last in great personages, wage a general warfare with whatever was corrupt, false, and obstructive. For a remodelling of this description it is true, there could be no regular and legitimate form. It rested upon spiritual effects and influences not susceptible of calculation, and required to be prosecuted

by organs with peculiar qualifications and an inward call to the task. Either it could not be done at all, or only done spontaneously, and as the effect of enthusiasm and not of reflection. Here too, however, we can conceive two shapes of the matter, viz., a thoroughly tranquil development of the new Christian spirit, from the heart outwards, by means of doctrine and moral influence, and an exhaustive outbreak of it in bold and determined acts; in other words, either a reformatory evolution, or a reformatory catastrophe. And both these things we see make their appearance on the stage of history, the former chiefly among the precursors of the Reformation, the latter among those whom we call the Reformers in the stricter sense of the word. Now there are some who entertain the opinion that the former way ought to have been persevered in to the last, and who, accordingly, repudiate the heroic and revolutionary acts of Luther. This point of view, we may designate that of Erasmus, as he was the first distinguished man by whom it was occupied, although he has since been followed by many, especially Catholic authors; and according to it the quieter pioneers of the Reformation would, in respect of tendency and influence, though not in respect of gifts, be placed above those who actually achieved it. In this sense Erasmus says,[1] with special reference to the principal forerunner of Luther: "Wessel has much in common with Luther, but in how much more Christian and modest a way he states his doctrines than the most of that party!" And with a more general allusion to the men who preceded the Reformation, George Wicelius,[2] the well known mediator between the Protestant and Catholic parties, observes: "The pious Tauler, Gerson, Valla, Pico, Wessel, and Peter D'Ailly likewise saw that there was a bad state of matters in the Church; but did they, for that reason, secede from it and found new Churches? No. They strained their throats in crying out against it. They raised their voice like a trumpet and proclaimed to Christians their sins, that they

[1] Epist. ad Fratres infer. et orient. Fris. Opp. T. X. p. 1622.

[2] In his apology of 1533. Comp. *Goez* Comment. de Wesselo, p. 32. Respecting his position, see *Neander:* das Eine und Mannichfaltige des christlichen Lebens, Berl. 1840. s. 167—328. Even the Catholic polemic, we have mentioned above, John *Fabri* pronounces Wessel far more Christian and deserving of toleration than Luther.

might save their souls." Ought we, then, to adopt this view of Erasmus? It is right in so far, viz., that for a certain stage in the progress of the Reformation, discussion, Scripture, and the quiet influence of life, were the proper means to be used. In the main, however, and as respects the prosecution of a reformation to its ultimate issue, it is wrong; for that could never have been reached without the intervention of the strong hand. Such was also the conviction of Luther. In one of his letters he very characteristically says,[1] "Words are no longer of any use; it is now time to act, and on that principle we must proceed." And that he and his fellow-labourers, although as men they may here and there have erred, were yet right in the main, has been shown by the march of history and the nature of the circumstances. The synodal scheme was impracticable. The distinguished exertions of a Peter D'Ailly, Gerson, Wessel, Valla, Reuchlin, Erasmus, and others, which for the most part were confined within the limits of the hierarchy, or at least not opposed to it, proved vain. Their choicest and most impressive words died on the winds in the region of power; and what Jacob of Jüterbock[1] had long before declared, "That a reformation was not to be expected either from the will or the ability of the Pope and the high prelates," was fulfilled. Every measure of real reform was always either suppressed, undermined, or annihilated by the hierarchy. What, then, was to be done? Should it be said that Luther and the other reformers precipitated the matter and too hastily adopted violent measures? But then they were not the first. For several centuries the nations of Europe had given the Papacy ample time for amendment and self-reformation. From every quarter, by enemies and noble-minded friends, the Heirarchy had been admonished and warned; nay, were warned and implored even by Luther and Zwingli themselves. But all was of no avail. And as they persevered, and would not have it otherwise, a breach was inevitable; and the stream of the new spirit, which, in the meanwhile, had mightily swollen, and instead of being employed to irrigate and fertilize the Church, was forcibly extruded and dammed out of it, could not do otherwise than form a bed for itself.

[1] Letter to Melancthon of date 29th June 1530, Th. 4. S. 53. in de Wette.

[2] See vol. i. c. p. 208—216.

For everything there is a time: there was a time for the influence quietly exercised upon the mind by the forerunners of the Reformation, and there was also a time for the heroic action of the Reformers themselves. Without the former, there could have been no Reformation at all, at least it could not possibly have become the common cause of the people. Without the latter, it must have continued in its mere rudiments, and would never have eventuated in the actual foundation of a new and purified state of the Church. In so far as they fulfilled a historical, and in that a divine mission, we recognise both as great and worthy of commendation.

The rent which the Reformation could not but cause under the existing circumstances, was made contrary to the original will of those who were its authors. After the lapse of three hundred years, the antithesis still survives, and must pass through the successive stages of its course to a solution, the time and shape of which we do not yet descry; but in the midst of the inevitable conflict, a higher peace reigns between those of the combatants on either side who stand upon the common foundation of vital Christianity, maintain unity in necessary things, and know what is due to a brother differing from them but sincere in his sentiments, due to the public good, and due to their country.

END OF VOL. II.

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